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DAME REBECCA BERRY,

OR,

Court Scenes

IN THE REIGN OF

CHARLES THE SECOND.

“ Let not that devil,
That cursed curiosity, seduce you
To hunt for needless secrets, which, neglected,
Shall never hurt your quiet ; but, once known,
Shall sit upon your heart, pinch it with pain,
And banish the sweet sleep for ever from you.
Go to : — be yet advised.”

JANE SHORE.

“ What then ? Things do their best, — and they and we
Must answer for the intent, and not the event.”

OLD PLAY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

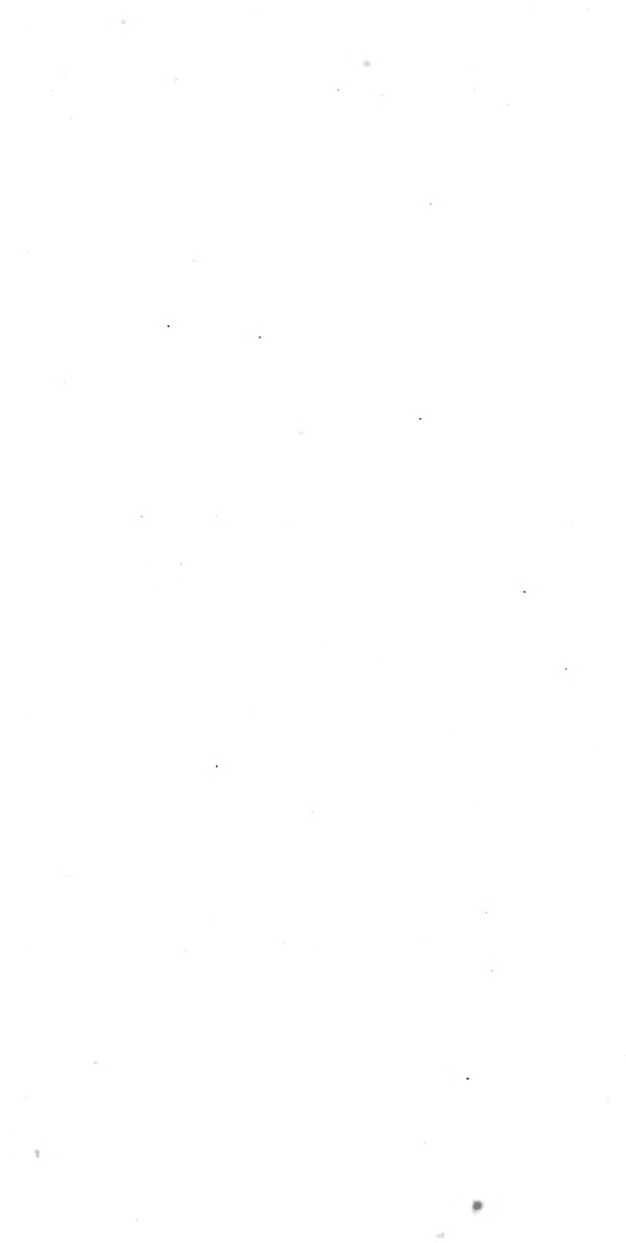
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DAME REBECCA BERRY.

CHAPTER I.

THE extraordinary and unlooked-for transition which had taken place in the convent, in the marriage of the young novice, instead of her being professed, raised a tumult and disorder which was not easily quelled. But Rosalie's father, the Marquis de V——, was too powerful and illustrious a personage to be disregarded; and the Lady Abbess was under the disagreeable necessity of receiving, with apparent graciousness, those benefices in lieu of his daughter which he now bestowed in the most munificent manner.

The termination of Rosalie's destiny in a happy union with her lover, instead of her taking the vows and becoming a nun, quite delighted Lady Berry ; she longed to have congratulated her upon her present felicity, and to have pressed to her bosom the lovely, warm-hearted Geraldine.

Rebecca said little to the prioress on the subject, as she saw she was dissatisfied with the termination of the day. She was glad to hear her intention of taking leave of the Lady Abbess on the following morning, and immediately embarking for Bristol, if any vessel was bearing that way.

Rebecca's anxiety respecting her husband had never slept—she became most impatient for letters, and determined to go to Woodside for a few days to await their arrival, if despatches from Sir John had not already come.

CHAP. II.

AFTER her temporary absence, Rebecca tasted comparative happiness in the green solitudes of Woodside, now glowing in all the rich beauties of summer ; she built a thousand aërial castles of anticipated delight when her beloved husband should again come home. His letters were full of love and tenderness, and he gave her the promise of a very speedy return.

Several days had thus passed away, when one morning she was surprised to see the abbot advancing through the pleasure-ground, on his fat, sleek mule, with slow and solemn pace ; and, as he drew near the house, stop with an undetermined air, as if irresolute whether or not to proceed, as he evidently had seen her from the open window at which she

was standing, watching him as he advanced.

At length the gate was opened for him by a little boy, and he entered, but she found with even a graver deportment than usual.

Rebecca, prone to alarm and apprehension, waited not till he entered, but flying towards the abbot, with a faltering accent, enquired the occasion of so unexpected a visit.

The fixed melancholy which spread over his pale countenance too plainly told his afflicting errand. Naturally firm and collected, with a mind prepared to meet with resignation every trial in life, yet this pious, excellent man could not behold the young, the beautiful, the bereaved Rebecca without a degree of painful emotion which he could not conceal.

“Holy father,” she exclaimed in agitation, “speak at once your errand? Keep me not in suspense; I am prepared for

the worst. I read some evil tidings in your tearful eye. You sympathize with the bereaved Rebecca ; you come to tell me that my husband is slain ; you need not speak the word ; you cannot contradict the terrible surmise."

"Return to the house," feebly answered the venerable man (attempting to give her that support which he himself required), "where, dear daughter, I will unfold my mission."

Rebecca, with tottering steps, accompanied the abbot into the small parlour opening into the garden, and, seating herself with a look of anguish and despair, waited in breathless expectation to hear what the venerable man had to say.

He took from his bosom a letter, holding it open, with a mournful and solemn voice he exclaimed, "Daughter of affliction, now is the time to show your submission, your resignation to the dispensations of Providence. It is, alas ! as you surmise, Sir John Berry is slain !"

Uttering a piercing shriek, she fell senseless on the floor. It was long before she came to herself, when she was borne to her bed.

For some time the venerable abbot remained at Woodside ; but, finding that Lady Berry's fever and delirium increased to an alarming height, he went back to Bristol, and immediately sent a medical man, accompanied by the prioress, to attend upon Rebecca.

The doctor's apprehension was soon verified. Lady Berry gave premature birth to a dead son ; and, for several days, her own life was despaired of.

The watchful, faithful prioress never quitted her friend until she was pronounced out of danger ; and, to her vigilance and tender care (under Providence), she owed her partial recovery. Her frame and spirits had sustained a shock which time alone could heal.

When sufficiently come to a sense of her forlorn condition, she requested her

friend to give her the particulars of her husband's death. Sir John had fallen mortally wounded, his horse killed under him, while endeavouring to quell an insurrection in the west, when the king's troops completely routed the rebels. Many valuable officers having shared the same fate as Berry.

Shortly before he expired, he dictated a letter addressed to abbot Lawrence, conjuring him to unfold his death with caution and tenderness to his beloved wife, and to give her the assurance that his last prayer sent to Heaven, was for her support and comfort; he entreated she would endeavour to sustain herself with fortitude and resignation for the sake of her unborn infant; and felt assured, that her virtues and piety would be rewarded by blessings to gladden her future years. Sir John Berry left Mr. Elton his sole executor and guardian for his child; confident of the excellence and integrity of his character, and the

esteem in which he was held by Lady Berry. This proof of Sir John's confidence and friendship affected Mr. Elton extremely. Indeed it proved a severe trial to his feelings, owing to the tender regard he entertained for Rebecca. He had never seen her since her marriage. He judged it better to withdraw himself entirely from her society, than encourage an attachment which personal intercourse could only tend to keep alive. He therefore made an excursion to Liverpool, visited the Chesterville family (his late father's friends), and other commercial towns, on imagined business; thus diverting his mind, till unexpectedly called upon to fulfil the executorship to Sir John Berry's will.

When Rebecca could bear to be removed from Woodside, she boarded herself for a time in the convent, where every spiritual comfort was administered by the holy abbot, and the most soothing kind-

ness poured into her lacerated heart by the pious prioress.

After the first transports of her grief subsided, she sunk into a pensive serenity of mind, and acquired a degree of fortitude and resignation, which religion alone could effect.

Mr. Elton met her with firmness, respect, and kindness. With the most active and friendly exertions he entered into the settlement of her affairs; but Sir John Berry had left every thing in such a clear unencumbered state, little trouble attended their adjustment.

He advised her Ladyship to go into Leicestershire, and take immediate possession of her property there; which, in case of the demise of their child, she was to enjoy during her life, and it was afterwards to go to a distant branch of his family. Mr. Elton told Rebecca that he would meet her at ———; and advised her not to travel alone, but request Mrs. Chesterville to spare her

daughter Charlotte to accompany her. Mr. Elton thought the natural vivacity of that amiable young lady would tend to cheer the dejection and solitude of Lady Berry.

Rebecca saw at once the kind consideration of Mr. Elton towards her, which she returned with a faint smile of grateful acknowledgment.

She wrote to her young friend, as he requested. Mr. Elton, in a letter of his own to Mr. Chesterville, urged the necessity of his compliance, as it was impossible for his sister, now wholly withdrawn from the world, to attend their afflicted friend.

An immediate answer was returned from Mrs. Chesterville to this effect : —

“ *To Lady Berry.*

“ To refuse dearest Lady Berry’s request to have my daughter Charlotte’s company, is impossible ; I therefore send her with one of her brothers to Bristol.

I hope my kind, amiable Rebecca will find her so far improved by the last year she has added to her youthful life, as to prove a soothing, agreeable companion.

“ May the Almighty comfort and bless you with happier days, fervently wishes your affectionate and sincere

“ CHARLOTTE CHESTERVILLE.”

The prioress was delighted with the arrangement made for Rebecca, as her brother judged it requisite for her to go into Leicestershire ; though she could not help fancying that she would have tasted more happiness and repose in the monastery, than engaging her mind in worldly concerns. However, she yielded to Mr. Elton’s opinion, and Rebecca prepared for her departure.

The meeting between Lady Berry and her young friend was most affecting.

Charlotte Chesterville, without having lost any portion of her native sprightliness, was so touched with the beauty

and mournful interest of Rebecca's appearance, her heart melted into pity and tenderness, when, with faded cheeks and trembling frame, Lady Berry held out her arms to embrace her.

“ My ever dear Charlotte,” she exclaimed, tears flowing from her eyes, “ the kind participator in your friend's eventful life, how can I sufficiently thank you for coming at such a time, when youth generally flies from the house of mourning, and at the very name of sorrow, the gay heart sickens with despondency ?”

“ My Rebecca shall never despond,” cried Charlotte, trying to smile away her tears ; “ while I may hope to cheer a friend I so entirely love as my dear Lady Berry. If it is not at present the season for gaiety, it shall not be the season of despair — we will hope in the future. Though you no longer find me quite a mad-cap, you will find me in

heart and disposition the same Charlotte Chesterville.”

It was settled the two friends should set out for Leicestershire the following day.

Mr. Elton, from a feeling of delicacy, said he would go before them, that every thing at Westwood Park might be ready for their reception; but arranged so kindly the plan of Rebecca's journey, she had no care or difficulty on the road.

She took an affectionate leave of the abbot and prioress, whose earnest and pious benediction was graciously bestowed.

The gloom and seclusion of a monastery did not accord with the lively disposition of Charlotte Chesterville, and she was glad once more to emerge into the world.

They journeyed by easy stages through the most fertile and beautiful parts of Gloucester and Worcestershire, till they came into the more flat scenery of Lei-

cestershire. The country was glowing in all the rich luxuriance of summer. Every hedgerow breathed odours from the profusion of wild flowers which bloomed on the road-side. The verdant pastures were grouped with peasantry, employed in making hay; and their rustic voices often broke on the stillness of the morning in some rude roundelay. The sun, cloudless and bright, shone in many a verdant glade and sloping bank, bounding the meandering river, over which was thrown an ancient bridge, while the numberless windmills, which always blend in the landscape of a flat country, had quite a novel appearance to Rebecca.

Mr. Elton had faithfully fulfilled his promise. Rebecca found the old-fashioned mansion not only habitable but comfortable, and well aired. Here another trial awaited her. She had come to the paternal home of Sir John Berry, who now slept in his grave. The voice

which was wont to cheer her was for ever hushed. Every room was solitary and deserted ; 'no person was there to bid her welcome ; for Mr. Elton could not usurp the privilege that alone belonged to a husband, and forbore to appear, having taken up his lodging at a small inn in the neighbourhood.

A respectable elderly woman met Rebecca at the hall door, and humbly curtsying, begged to show Her Ladyship the way to the library, which she said Mr. Elton thought the most cheerful of the apartments. He had considerably selected the library, as having the least desolate appearance, being well furnished with books, and ornamented with fine sculpture ; for Sir John's father was a man of taste and science : hence his son inherited some portion of his acquirements, though his military life had afforded little leisure in the young man of study ; but a fondness for poetry had

shown itself in several instances, in making Rebecca his votary.

As Rebecca surveyed the house, which gave the promise of so much bliss in every surrounding object, which seemed to bespeak love, peace, and harmony, her bursting heart found relief in a flood of tears, as she hung on the arm of her young friend for support.

“Methinks,” she faintly exclaimed, “I see the shade of my departed husband in all around — every thing speaks and breathes of him. ’Twas in this room he sat — with these books conversed — in these shady walks he loved to meditate.

“Oh, blessed spirit !” she with fervour continued, “look down upon your widowed, your disconsolate Rebecca,” (sinking on her knees before a portrait of Sir John Berry over the mantle-piece), “and may thy beatified spirit watch over, guide, and protect her.

“Observe, dear Charlotte,” she added,

pointing to the picture, “with what a benignant smile he seems now to regard me. Just so he looked, when fondly he clasped me to his heart, which beats no longer. Oh, I could gaze on that sweet resemblance of all that was good and great, till I could almost fancy the inanimate canvass breathed and spoke ; for here he lives again before me.”

Charlotte Chesterville, who began to be alarmed at the high-wrought feelings of Rebecca, said, with a half smile, “This will never do, my precious friend. You must suffer me to lead you hence, or I shall have my care of you called in question.”

“Observe,” she proceeded, “what a lovely scene lies before us of sweeping woods, verdant lawns, and flowery banks; let us taste the fragrant air, for it breathes only peace and freshness.”

Rebecca, sensible of Charlotte’s kindness, severely chid herself for giving way

to the indulgence of her grief, and assented to her proposal.

The length and fineness of the evening admitted of their remaining not only long in the pleasure grounds, but of taking refreshment in a rustic temple, which romantically hung on the border of a clear winding stream, shaded by trees, whose branches waved over it in pensile beauty.

In this beautiful sequestered spot the two friends spent the evening together.

Mr. Elton, at a loss how to fill up his evening at a solitary inn, had wandered from the adjacent village, through bye shady lanes, till, unawares, he came to the very spot through which private walks were cut, to where the friends were seated.

Colouring with confusion and surprise he apologized for an intrusion so unintended, and was proceeding, when Rebecca, in her soft persuasive voice, invited him to partake of the fruit set

before them ; with an air of embarrassment, but pleasure, he accepted the invitation.

Rebecca, pure and innocent in mind as in deed, felt no wrong in asking the society of Mr. Elton, for she meant none ; he was the brother of her friend, the son of her lamented benefactors ; nor did she guess the extent of his affection for her. He respected as tenderly as he loved her.

Kindly he bade her good night at the door of her mansion, saying, he would see her at twelve the day following, to make her acquainted with some of her tenants, and to introduce the rector.

Charlotte Chesterville shared the same apartment with Rebecca ; and on the bosom of her tender friend she was lulled to rest.

CHAP. III.

IN a few days Rebecca became so fond of Westwood, she determined to make it her future home. She even began to form arrangements with Mr. Elton for that purpose, in the settlement of her affairs. She was certain Mrs. Chester-ville would allow Charlotte to remain with her some time longer, as her youthful society insensibly had cheered and consoled her. Her former flippancy was now chastened by her good sense ; her mind was finely regulated, and her temper so serene, yet cheerful, no companion could have proved so suited to the sober sadness of Rebecca.

Lady Berry's recent state of widowhood precluded all visitors ; but many were the kind enquiries of the neighbouring gentry ; for she was come to a

part of the country where the late baronet's family had, for centuries, lived in the highest respect and estimation. Curiosity and interest was warmly, nay, anxiously excited towards Rebecca; her beauty, meek, pensive demeanour, recent affliction, created no common interest. The only place at which she had been seen was the small country church at ———, in the family pew belonging to the Berrys; yet it was like some fair vision, enveloped in a shadowy cloud, for her lovely face was concealed by her long flowing veil, blending with her sable garments. Her slender, graceful figure, meekly bent in sorrow, might have personified that of resignation, with her arms folded across her bosom, and her dark blue eyes cast down in tearful sorrow, as she was supported to her seat by the tender Charlotte, whose natural vivacity was subdued by a look of the tenderest solicitude, and whose lively eyes now shone only with watchful tenderness.

The aisles were thronged with the congregation, who stood with respect and courtesy, as she passed along after the service. The young, the middle-aged, the grey-headed, doft their hats, and every one seemed inclined to say, "God bless thee!"

Tears of gratitude, of humility, of thankfulness, sprang to Rebecca's eyes as she complacently regarded these simple, unsophisticated people. She was proud of such a tribute of respect; sensible it was paid to the relic of Sir John Berry, and gratified by such an honourable distinction to his memory.

Rebecca began to devote a portion of her time in visiting the poor, administering to their necessities, distributing money for their use, and greatly ameliorating their sufferings. She daily perceived the happy effect of her bounty amongst them; and it was one of her greatest pleasures, accompanied by Charlotte Chesterville, to go from cottage to cottage, and look

into their condition and relieve their wants. Nothing could tend more effectually to soothe and restore Rebecca's spirits to a certain tone of cheerfulness than a consciousness of having been enabled to relieve the wants of her fellow-creatures. If Rebecca was not happy, she had no rebukes of conscience from having failed in those duties of life required from all who are never more or less without the ability to administer to others.

She beheld thankful contentment spread over the faces of those to whom she had become as a benevolent angel.

Squalid wretchedness gradually disappeared; plain, homely cleanliness reigned in every cottage. The women, the children became industrious in making lace, the employment of females in Leicestershire; and the mills went actively round. Rebecca's days, in early youth, had been too constantly occupied to admit of squandering time like

many idle fine ladies. She did nothing beneath the proper calling of her now exalted sphere ; and showed an excellent example of constant useful employment in those various pursuits which ultimately tended to the good and happiness of others.

Thus passed a year of her life at ——— daily becoming more attached to the place. She moved in every spot around her with a sentiment of respect and affection, mingled with fond regret towards her departed husband, who, with such tender consideration had endeavoured, not only to preserve her consequence, but enjoyment, by wishing her to reside at Westwood ; and she felt it particularly endeared, not merely on that account, but as having been the place of his birth, the happy scene of his childhood, and his paternal home. Hence, every idea of tenderness and respect was here peculiarly associated with her lamented husband.

CHAP. IV.

THE sombre season of autumn, with all its hues of richly variegated shades, had begun to blend with the fading landscape, and Rebecca had been prevailed on to accompany Charlotte Chesterville back to Liverpool on a visit to her friends, when her plans were painfully disconcerted by a letter from Abbot Lawrence, who always seemed to her to be the messenger of evil tidings.

He informed Lady Berry, his niece the prioress lay dangerously ill of a fever ; that in her delirium she constantly raved about her, and entreated her ladyship would hasten to Bristol without delay.

Rebecca, shocked and afflicted, immediately prepared to obey the summons.

Instead of taking Miss Chesterville

home, she was to accompany Rebecca to Bristol, and take up her abode with Lady Berry for the present in the convent, to which she somewhat reluctantly assented, having a horror for a monastic life.

Mournful to Rebecca proved the hour of her departure from Westwood. If she had not tasted perfect bliss during the year passed in the lovely seclusion of Leicestershire, she had lived at least in tranquillity amidst those scenes which became endeared from so many tender and melancholy associations; and though deprived of those close ties which render existence precious, she experienced comparative happiness from the consciousness that she had contributed to the enjoyment and comfort of many of her fellow-creatures, and that she was respected and beloved in a spot to which she was now, perhaps, going to bid a final adieu.

The drooping flowers, the fading

leaves, bore semblance to her own fate. She was the fair flower whose blossoms of hope were blighted when fast growing to perfection. The aspect of her future days was become sombre as the darkening shades of approaching winter, when the sun would withdraw its gladdening rays; for there was no sunshine in the coming years of Rebecca's life. She lost in Sir John Berry the husband of her choice — the idol of her affection. Her every thought was blended with his departed shade, and her heart seemed as if it would never more open to joy.

True, she entertained the most perfect friendship and regard for Constance, but their joys, their sorrows, no longer, as formerly, mingled together. The absence of confidence insensibly weans affection; and Rebecca, who could not build her joys beneath the austere gloom of a monastery, fond as she was of seclusion, rather imposed a duty on herself on the present occasion, in entirely devoting herself to

the prioress. Beside, she was throwing herself in Mr. Elton's way, and reviving a tenderness in his bosom which she wished to quell ; for her's was cold and indifferent, and she viewed the world and all around her with unconcern.

The fever which had seized the prioress was abated before Lady Berry's arrival ; and she had the satisfaction to find her on the recovery. Rebecca's unceasing attention proved most salutary ; but her weak frame had sustained a shock from the severity of the disease which it could not baffle ; and at length it was determined, by the advice of her physicians, she should visit some sisters of the order of the Virgin, at Bradstow, now Broadstairs, in the Isle of Thanet, for the benefit of sea-bathing.

The feast of the Invocation of the Holy Cross, which was to be celebrated on the 3d of May with great solemnity, determined the prioress to be present on the

occasion, that she might pour forth her thanks to the Almighty for her restoration.

The two friends embarked on board a small packet for Broadstairs. When almost within sight of land, a sudden squall arose, which rendered it impossible to reach the port; and the master bearing out far to sea, after a most perilous and tempestuous voyage of two days, they were put ashore at the small fishing-town of Whitby, in Yorkshire, instead of Broadstairs.

Once more in the north of England, Rebecca fancied herself at home. The wild sterility of the scenery was familiar to her eye. With it was associated a thousand tender, a thousand painful recollections; and, as she gazed on the surrounding hills, tears flowed from her eyes, for she viewed them like old acquaintances.

They were now within a day's journey of York, which city the prioress intended visiting, that she might view the sublime

Minster, and spend a few days with some friends in the neighbourhood.

When Rebecca again beheld the river Ouse, her heart seemed to recoil from its limpid waves; and though she did not know the exact tract of country where Selby was situated, yet she thought of her early humble friends, Michael Barton and his wife, and their meek and pure spirits seemed to hover over her as she bestowed a sigh and tear to their memory.

She fancied that not far distant might dwell her parents. Ah! with them what tenderness was associated! — and she determined to travel from one part of Yorkshire to the other in the fond hope of discovering and seeing them.

CHAP. V.

EVERY tract of land now became familiar to Rebecca, as they travelled towards York. She determined, on their arrival in that city, to leave the prioress with her friends, and proceed along the banks of the Ouse, till she came to Selby, which she felt certain could not be far distant from Gloomore Castle.

When they were within two stages of York, Rebecca's eyes, with searching anxiety, rested on every object likely to revive some recollection of the spot which she sought; one of the wheels of the carriage came off, and they were obliged to halt within a hundred yards of a substantial-looking farm-house, which stood within a green pasture looking on the road-side.

A man, leading a hay-cart, stopped on

observing the accident, and good-naturedly offered his assistance.

“You be ladies in a bad plight,” he said ; “ it might have proved an ugly accident. I will get you help ; we have plenty of hands at Green Meadows-bank ; and if you will be pleased to come along with me to father’s, where you will be main welcome to rest yourselves, the chaise will soon be set to rights.”

Lady Berry and the prioress did not refuse the young man’s offer. He desired the post-boy to remain where he was till he came back, and then offered his services to the ladies.

The farmer had a comely, open countenance ; and, though he spoke in the broad Yorkshire dialect, there was something so kind and obliging in his manner, Rebecca was quite pleased with the friendliness he showed.

He led them through a gate into a broad cart-road, from which they immediately branched off into a narrow path,

across a beautiful meadow covered with sheep and cattle, and conducted towards the house. Rebecca's ear caught, as they proceeded, the wild tones of a melodious voice warbling a song, and she beheld a young woman seated with her pail in the act of milking.

Delighted in witnessing this rural occupation, she came beside the young woman, who, bashful, and unused to strangers, coloured in confusion, and in a moment her face and neck became scarlet, as she hastily turned her head aside to conceal her embarrassment. She had passed the early bloom of girlish loveliness, and appeared to be about thirty. Her soft dove-like eyes beamed with sweetness; and there was such goodness portrayed in the expression of her fine ruddy countenance, Rebecca could not resist addressing her.

“Your occupation, young woman,” she exclaimed, “seems to be fraught with health and enjoyment, for it beams

in your face. Your's is a life as simple as it appears to be happy."

"Yes, good Madam," she replied, casting her eyes down, "you say true. And father and mother are so kind to us all, God blesses our endeavours, if we do our duty."

"Sister Ruth," interrupted the young man, "if you can leave off your milking just for a minute, I wish you would run to the house, and tell mother two stranger ladies would be glad to rest themselves for a while, having met with an accident; and ask her to put some refreshment on the table."

"That I will," replied Ruth, eagerly, "mother will do her best, I am sure, if the stranger ladies will excuse our homely fare."

Away flew Ruth, with her fair tresses floating in the wind, and was out of sight in a minute.

Rebecca's eyes followed her with a feeling which she could not define. The name

of Ruth seemed to vibrate on her heart, as one which she had fondly lisped in her first feeble attempt to give sound articulation. She was also greatly struck with the sweetness of her countenance and natural, kind manner; the tears sprang to her eyes, as she anxiously surveyed her and every surrounding object.

If such was the impression the young woman made upon Rebecca, neither had the prioress been an idle spectator of the scene; but she kept to herself, for the present, the idea that floated in her mind, of the resemblance which she bore to Lady Berry, which she could not think was altogether accidental. True, she apparently was her senior by twelve or fourteen years, yet still their countenances were alike. The same dove-like expression of eyes, only that Rebecca's had more intelligence and brilliancy in their expression. The contour of their faces was the same; the same glossy, fair curling hair; the same soft voice, except

that Rebecca's was more modulated by education ; yet they were of the same tender, silvery tone, which seemed to breathe from the same source.

The young man also, though sun-burnt, and fresh-coloured, had a sort of family resemblance to Lady Berry.

There was a rural repose about Green Meadows that delighted Rebecca, as they advanced towards the house, which they entered by a low rustic porch, over which the honeysuckle flowered in fragrant luxuriance. Over the old walls spread several fruit-trees, partially shading the heavy-latticed windows. To the left spread a considerable farm, well stocked with all its various produce, and bespoke peace and plenty.

When they reached the house, a most respectable-looking, plain-drest, matronly woman advanced from the porch ; and, as she curtseyed to them, said with benignant kindness, " You be welcome, respected Madams, to rest at Green

Meadows, quite welcome. Pray don't hurry yourselves, for there is a small, neat parlour to yourselves; do let me show you the way."

The dame, as she proceeded, more than once turned her head back, looking so earnestly at Rebecca, she was quite distressed.

"I ask your pardon, Madam," said the dame, "and beg you will excuse my freedom; I don't mean to be rude, but somehow, sweet lady, you are so like my daughter Ruth, I cannot take my eyes off you.

"You saw Ruth, Madam," addressing the prioress, "Isn't there a likeness?"

The prioress answered, "They are both fair, and both pretty."

"This young Madam is beautifuller than Ruth; but if my observation is not too bold, they might be taken for sisters. I hope," she continued, turning to Lady Berry, "you won't be offended, Madam,

at my likening you to Farmer Russell's daughter."

Rebecca heard not — saw not — she gave a shriek, and would have fallen senseless to the ground, if the prioress had not caught her in her arms.

"I hope I have said no wrong," exclaimed the affrighted woman, as she loudly called to Ruth to bring water, to restore the fainting lady.

She assisted the prioress in carrying the still senseless Rebecca to the settle, on which they placed her.

After a considerable time she revived, wildly gazing around her; at length, eagerly grasping the hand of the good woman, and throwing her arms round her neck, she faintly articulated the tender, touching name of — Mother!

"The poor lady," said Mistress Russell, anxiously regarding her, "is not, I am afraid, in her right mind; has she lost her mother, seeing she is in black, and taken me for her?"

“Yes, oh! yes,” Rebecca cried with emotion, “I had indeed lost my mother — for ever lost her, unknown — unheard of — in vain I have searched — in vain articulated a name so tender — none answered to the call; but now, in you, I feel that I am folded to her bosom. Your name at once,” added the weeping Rebecca, “will clear all doubts — tell me, are you called Russell? Had you ever a daughter Rebecca?”

“Had I?” interrupted the woman, with eager transport; “in good sooth I had — never was born a prettier, dearer child; but she was some how spirited away from us by that wicked magician, Sir Ambrose Templeton. Sore was it to part with our little darling; and sore has been our grief since that unlucky day. Whether he kept her under his enchantment, or has spirited her away, the poor master nor me could never find out.

“If, indeed,” she proceeded, tenderly examining Lady Berry’s countenance,

“it is the will of God to restore our child, and I may trust my eyes that this beautiful and noble-looking lady is our daughter Rebecca, the master as well as me will be beside himself with joy.”

“I am your own, your long-lost child Rebecca,” exclaimed she, fondly hanging on her bosom. “Oh, my mother, take me to your heart — let me feel its tender throbbings. Bless your long-lost daughter — say that you love and own her.”

“Will you,” replied Mistress Russell, somewhat encouraged, “own so poor a body as Farmer Russell’s wife for your mother? and not look down upon us, sweet young lady.”

“Am I not your child?” replied Rebecca, with tender ardour. “Oh, think not so meanly of me — can any station alter natural affection! or snap the stem from which we grow, or tear the tender blossom from its parent tree? — oh, never — never!”

“Sweet lady,” cried she, sobbing

aloud, "your words quite melt me — my old heart cannot contain its overpowering feelings." Rebecca tenderly embraced her.

Ruth, who now joined the group, stood in amazement, unable to comprehend what the scene could mean.

Rebecca, disengaging herself from her mother's embrace, saluting her, exclaimed, "Dear sister of my heart, who, in infancy, so often bore me in your arms, oh, now again receive your long-lost, ever-loved Rebecca.

"But where," she continued, "is my father and brothers?—send them hither; for, great as is my present bliss, how incomplete it proves while they are absent."

The venerable father of his family, who now returned home from the labours of the day, came into the hall to partake of the evening repast, spread on a long table; but, observing two stranger ladies, stopped short, doffed his hat, and, making a rude bow, was retiring, when Rebecca

suddenly sprang forward, and throwing herself on her knees before the old man, whose benignant eye was fixed on her with wonder and surprise, he stood speechless, viewing her as some fair spirit escaped from the nether world, so beautiful and so beatified she appeared.

“You know not then,” Lady Berry exclaimed, “you cannot know your long-lost daughter Rebecca. Oh! dearest, venerable father, bless your child; for in me you again behold her — and, as some wandering fugitive, she comes to claim your affection.”

Farmer Russell, unable to comprehend what all he saw and heard could mean, with eager curiosity cast his eyes first on Rebecca, then his wife, for an explanation.

The old man took Lady Berry's hand, and raised her from her kneeling posture, anxiously regarding her with wonder and solicitude, he at length exclaimed, “Whether you be or not my daughter Rebecca, God bless thy lovely face. My heart,”

he added, "somehow yearns towards thee, and flutters like a bird, if I could only be certain so fair a creature was indeed my child, then I could say with the patriarch of old, 'it is enough, for no longer will my grey hairs go down with sorrow to the grave.'

"Tell me, goody," he proceeded, turning to his wife, "how all this has come about; I seem in a dream."

"It is the will of God," replied the Mistress, "to bring back our daughter to us to bless our old age. Look in her face, and you will discern it is our own Rebecca."

Lady Berry fixed her eyes on her father, who silently folded his arms round her, as the tears coursed down his furrowed cheeks; but he could not speak; it was a sort of agonizing joy which robbed him of utterance.

The prioress, afraid Lady Berry would again faint from excess of feeling, proposed her taking some refreshment, and

requested her mother to lead the way, saying they would now gladly accept her proffered hospitality.

The venerable father of his family, with a feeling of bashfulness took Rebecca's hand, as if asking permission for the freedom; for she had such a look of superiority, both her parents seemed to shrink from any familiarity, forgetting at the moment she actually was their child, though with encouraging smiles and speeches she addressed them, and her sister Ruth, who could only look on the lovely stranger with wonder and admiration. With difficulty Lady Berry prevailed on her brother and sister to be seated in her presence. The repast was simple; the old man sanctified it with his blessing, and requested to drink to the health and welcome of his stranger guests.

“By what name am I to call your friend?” asked Rebecca's father. Her dismal garb, as does your own, tells some

cause for sorrow ; some heavy loss you have suffered."

" Drink, father," returned Rebecca, " to the prioress of St. Augustine, who, on a pilgrimage for health, now journeys hither."

" Health and comfort to you, pious lady," he exclaimed, bowing low ; " and you, my child Rebecca," he added, fondly regarding her, " I see, by the ring you wear, are married ;" — he paused. " And a widow." — She interrupted in a passionate burst of tears.

" Poor thing !" cried the old man, with a heavy sigh, as he tenderly passed his rough hand over her cheek.

" I would learn your husband's name," anxiously enquired her mother, though afraid of distressing her more.

" Berry," faintly articulated Rebecca. " Your daughter, Lady Berry," said the prioress, " is the widow of Sir John Berry."

" Lady — Lady Berry," stammered

out the old man, with a look of something like vexation spreading over his clouded brow, and unconsciously walking to the window.

“ You would have loved my husband, dear father,” she said with quickness as she followed him, “ and I trust you will love the disconsolate, desolate Rebecca. Do I not require a father and mother’s affection to supply my heavy loss?” “ You do — you shall,” interrupted the old man emphatically, as once more he folded her in his arms.

“ I find, daughter Rebecca, I cannot form my speech to call you my lady, though you are not ashamed of farmer Russell for your father. So God bless thee, my child, and may the blessing of both your parents cheer and give comfort to your future days.”

Sweet was the sleep of Rebecca beneath the shelter of her father’s roof. The eyes of her parents once more gazed on her with fondness. Their love was

balm to her afflicted heart, and the fearful void was now filled up with all that could tend to soothe and ameliorate her grief.

CHAP. VI.

THE prioress, anxious to pursue her journey to York, consented to leave Lady Berry with her parents at Green Meadows farm for a few days, at the end of which time she promised to join her at Sir William Widdrington's; his lady was a particular friend of the late Lady Frances Elton's, and on this pilgrimage the prioress was permitted to visit.

Rebecca having, for the present, taken leave of her friend, satisfied the anxiety and impatience of her parents, by briefly relating to them every circumstance of her eventful life, from the time of her separation down to the present hour.

They saw with gratitude the hand of Providence, in having preserved and supported their child in the midst of so many difficulties and trials. They admired

such strength of mind in a creature so young and inexperienced ; and, though they found her returned to them ennobled, they also found her guileless, simple, uncorrupted. Only now restored, after such a lapse of years, and believing her either dead or lost to them for ever, they yet had sufficient good sense to be conscious of the distance which was placed between them, from the high rank their daughter held in society ; and, however painful might be the parting from her again, they urged not her stay beyond the period fixed for her departure.

The intercourse between them had proved tender and endearing. Rebecca had shown them filial respect and affection. She felt it all, and assured her parents her greatest happiness would be to yearly visit Green Meadows farm. She offered to enlarge the farm, and to improve their means of subsistence, which her father positively refused, by saying,

“ We have enough, daughter, quite enough for a comfortable livelihood ; and though I cannot toil as when a young man, I bless God your brother and sister lighten our cares by their industry, and cheer our winter’s fireside by their dutiful care and good humour.”

“ What can we want more ?” he added, patting her cheek. “ Nothing ! now that our child Rebecca is restored to us.”

“ Be it then,” Lady Berry replied, “ as you wish, dear father ; and, since you will have no worldly aid, let me, I pray, share the affection of those children who have not, like me, been useless. Yet believe, you would not have found me backward in my duty, had I been called upon.”

When the day arrived, on which Rebecca was to leave Green Meadows farm, the parting was tender and affecting.

Ruth, who so often had fondled Rebecca in her arms when she was an infant, now,

that she had become more familiarised, hung about her with the most sisterly affection, and folded her with tears to her throbbing bosom ; her father pressed his rough cheek to her's, and her mother took her in her maternal arms.

Farmer Russell accompanied his daughter to the gates of Sir William Widderington's park, and there took leave of her affectionately.

Rebecca found the prioress anxiously awaiting her arrival.

Lady Berry was courteously welcomed by the baronet and his lady, who possessed all the hospitality and cheering kindness of old-fashioned times.

Sir William and his lady were in the habit of usually having their house filled with guests. No sooner did one set of visitors depart, than others came. At present the number was circumscribed on account of the prioress, to whom society proved distasteful, though her

hostess was too well bred to impose any restraint upon her.

The prioress spent her mornings in religious seclusion, but at dinner joined the company.

The perpetual fluctuation of visitors proved rather amusing to Rebecca, from the variety of characters which came under her observation.

Sir William Widderington, in his youth, had been a great fox-hunter, and though now unable to follow the chase with his former activity, he still enjoyed and engaged in the sport ; and most of his associates were gentlemen of that description, with the exception of one of his neighbours, whose abstracted habits and secluded mode of life, seldom led him into any society. For Sir William, however, he entertained a high esteem. They were not merely neighbours, but had been school-fellows ; and, from early associations, a friendship was found-

ed, which remained unshaken, notwithstanding his friend's eccentricities.

During Rebecca's stay at ———, the two knights took a morning ride together.

As they drew near Sir William's mansion, he said to his friend, "You positively shall go home and dine with us. What, though you have rashly renounced not only all society, but all womankind, for once abjure yourself. We have staying with us at present a most bewitching young widow; she is the loveliest creature I ever beheld. She is making a sort of pilgrimage with a prioress of the Benedictines, who is permitted to travel for the recovery of her health."

"Think you, Sir William," he replied, "that woman has power to charm me? As well might you bid me worship yon bright sun, as make one of the faithless sex the goddess of my idolatry."

"Well, well," continued the good-natured baronet, "I do not bid you

make Lady-Berry the goddess of your idolatry, but I bid you dine with me; and you cannot be so uncourteous to refuse:" riding quickly towards the park-gates, whither he was conducting him.

"Never turn your back on a neighbour's fare, nor a neighbour's mansion."

His friend, with a frown of discontent, sullenly complied, and let his horse follow the baronet to the stables, where they both dismounted.

The pealing gong announced the dinner. The assembled guests were ushered into the baronial-hall, where the table was spread. Lady Berry took her seat as first in degree beside Lady Widderington, and opposite to her was placed her husband's friend.

Rebecca, bashful, timid, sorrowful, raised not her eyes for some time, unconscious of the appalling, ardent gaze of Sir Ambrose Templeton. His eagle eye met her's; though he spoke not —

moved not — their electric fire struck with horror to her heart.

Rebecca endeavoured to sustain herself from fainting; though she turned deadly pale, trembled, and almost gasped for breath. But as Sir Ambrose either did not actually recognise her, or pretended not, she so far recovered her presence of mind as to keep her seat at table; though more than once Lady Widderington asked if she was ill, requesting she would use no ceremony, and retire if she wished.

To have done so would have been a tacit acknowledgment to Sir Ambrose of recognition. The firmness Lady Berry displayed, not only startled him, but almost made him question the inward conviction that Lady Berry and Rebecca Russell were one and the same person.

Her weeds somewhat altered the expression of her countenance. Her close-eared, plain wimple-cap, the concealment of her beautiful hair, no longer shading

her fair face and forehead, displayed all the deep anguish that furrowed her faded cheek ; and the melancholy drooping of her beautiful large eyes, spread a sadness on her brow ;

“ The temples were transparent, and so white,
That the blue veins ran through like rays of light.”

No dimples played round her mouth ; no smiles chased away her grief ; she was little less than a breathing statue.

Sir Ambrose spoke little ; and what he said was directed towards Sir William Widderington, on general topics.

It so happened, the prioress was not at table. It was a saint's day, and set apart for fasting and penance ; therefore Rebecca had not even her to support and comfort her.

The first course at dinner consisted alone of fish. Sir Ambrose was requested to help Lady Berry from the dish before him. The fish was small, and the whole was sent Rebecca.

Scarcely had she severed it with her fork, when she gave a sudden shriek, and covering her face with both her hands, fell back senseless in her chair. Lady Widderington, and the rest of the company, rose hastily in alarm. Sir Ambrose Templeton rose also, but it was with a look of proud satisfaction and triumph. He had watched the sudden effect and change produced in Lady Berry; and he alone knew the miraculous cause.

The *magic ring* concealed within the fish was found by Rebecca. The fatal promise she had made no power could now avert. Sir Ambrose was in that event her affianced husband, and he now stood before her to claim a promise from which in truth, in honour, she could not recede.

That something extraordinary had happened the company perceived, and stood up with eager curiosity to learn what it might be.

Sir Ambrose now advanced to where Lady Berry sat, and taking from the plate the magic ring, held it up on one of his fingers.

Rebecca, by the aid of hartshorn, slowly recovered, and, on opening her eyes, beheld Sir Ambrose somewhat tenderly and anxiously regarding her; she rose from her seat, and requested permission to retire.

Sir Ambrose, with a look of reproachful silence, held the ring before her, and said at length, as with an expression of horror she turned away, "Know you this magic ring?"

"My destiny," she faintly answered, "I find is sealed. At present, Sir Ambrose, in pity intrude not on me, intrude not on my sorrow.

"What I have said," she continued, with an expression of anguish, but with dignity and courage, "I mean not to unsay."

"You are mine, Rebecca," he inter-

rupted with vehemence, “you remember—”

“Alas! too well; follow me not now!”

“I will not, — if you will swear —”

“I go not from my vow; the promise which I made, believe, Sir Ambrose, is most sacred; though in fulfilling it you will possess the mournful relic of a heartless widow. In Sir John Berry’s grave sleeps all my former happiness.”

“Then for the present I release you; I know you to be truth itself, and in that truth I now rely.”

Sir Ambrose took her passive marble hand, and, leading her to the door, requested Miss Widderington to take care of Lady Berry to her chamber.

Rebecca, more dead than alive, threw herself on the bed, and, giving way to a burst of anguish, which tears somewhat relieved, she endeavoured to summon strength of mind for support in such a trying moment, to fulfil a promise irrevocable.

When she became composed, she arose, and gently tapt at the prioress's door; on hearing her voice she gave her ready admittance.

She was startled at Rebecca's deadly paleness, with such an expression of fixed despair; she was almost afraid to ask whence it originated?

"Your vows of happiness," she replied in a tone of melting anguish, "point towards that high, that right source, whence alone can spring our only certain promise of felicity. You have chosen the wiser path; neither earthly joy, nor earthly sorrow can ruffle a mind so pure, so untouched by sublunary things."

"To what does all this tend?" asked the prioress, with a look of calm enquiry. "If you are unhappy, seek consolation where you will be sure to find it."

Rebecca briefly related the unexpected meeting with Sir Ambrose Templeton; the extraordinary discovery of the ring;

and her fatal promise to become his wife, if ever it could be produced.

“Cheer you, my daughter,” the prioress answered, in a soothing manner. “Vows, whether made to God or man, cannot be broken; but remember too, only to linger on a few years more in this scene of trial and temptation, and so to act as to merit that endless happiness which is promised to those ‘who patiently continue in well doing.’ ’Tis now,” she proceeded, “your virtue is put to the test; show it will not falter. It is easy to do well when pleasure lies before us; to dally in its flowery paths; enhale its sweets, and idly dream away existence; but ’tis when the storms of life begin to gather, when nought is longer smiling gay before us, we must endeavour to resist with firmness, to endure with strength, to check each wayward passion, and bow with meek submission to the lot ordained us.”

Lady Berry listened with deep atten-

tion, as the prioress continued, "Do not meet Sir Ambrose Templeton with sullenness and frowns. Uncloud your troubled brow ; once a gentle, tender wife, be so again. Take example by our sainted mother ; what she was, do you try to be. Imagine that her blessed spirit now regards you."

"It is enough," eagerly interrupted Rebecca, endeavouring to chase away her tears, as her countenance assumed a look of placid sweetness. "Oh, say no more ; I am quite subdued ; I will try to be all you wish. Wise and profitable are your words, my sister ; they shall not be lost upon me."

The prioress folded Rebecca in her arms ; and, giving her a benediction, desired she would retire and compose herself.

A sweet beam of comfort seemed to gladden Rebecca. The words of the prioress sank deep into her heart. She experienced the efficacy of her advice,

and determined to profit by it. To effect her purpose, she sat down and wrote the following billet to Sir Ambrose Templeton : —

“ Your confidence in me shall not be shaken. Excuse my presence until to-morrow, when I will endeavour to meet you with that cheerfulness and collectedness becoming that new character, in which you will have a claim to those conjugal duties I shall strive to fulfil in a manner to merit your approbation and esteem.

“ REBECCA BERRY.”

Never was greater surprise experienced than when Lady Berry's billet was read by Sir Ambrose Templeton. The angry gloom which sat on his brow was instantly dispelled ; and, though a proud curl of triumph quivered on his lip, yet it yielded to a smile of satisfaction at the concluding line.

As he folded the paper, he exclaimed, "Rebecca, your triumph is great. No more will I think contemptibly of woman, if all indeed resemble you."

Years had elapsed since the baronet had put pen to paper. He snatched up one, and wrote thus to Rebecca : —

"Ill as I think of your sex in general, I make you an exception. I shall, therefore, suffer you to take your own way, placing implicit confidence in your word, which I deem as binding. Now, considering you my betrothed wife, I yield to my destiny, to your destiny, and conclude myself, Rebecca, your's faithfully and wholly,

"AMBROSE TEMPLETON."

Notwithstanding Lady Berry's attempt at composure, she gave an involuntary shudder when she glanced at the words in Sir Ambrose's letter, "*I yield to my destiny, to your destiny ;*" for she consi-

dered it impious. Though certainly now doomed, by an extraordinary combination of events, to unite herself to so singular a person as Sir Ambrose Templeton, it required all the fortitude she could collect to bestow her hand on a man who looked not to the events of life as proceeding from a Divine source, but resulting from the effect of predestination, which nothing could avert. Rebecca dared not reflect on a subject so awfully mysterious, but believing that all human foresight was for wiser purposes veiled from our eyes, with meek resignation in the will of heaven she determined to endeavour to act her part as well as human frailty admitted, and humbly trust herself into that hand which alone could guide her right.

CHAP. VII.

MORE than a year having elapsed since Rebecca's widowhood commenced, being so soon to appear in the character of a bride, she judged it a proper compliment to Sir Ambrose Templeton to no longer in person

“ Bear about the mockery of woe ;”

therefore the next morning, when she appeared at breakfast, she had cast off her weeds, and was drest in slight mourning, with her beautiful sunny hair flowing in a thousand ringlets over her face and neck.

Painful was Lady Berry's struggle when Sir Ambrose met her at the door to lead her to a seat, as he took her hand with a smile, which seemed unnatural, and muttered something like a compli-

ment on her change of attire, and the display of those glossy ringlets, no longer confined by a close-eared cap.

Sir William, Lady Widderington, and all the company were now acquainted with Lady Berry's history, and were formally introduced to her as Sir Ambrose's affianced wife.

The prioress also was present, and with looks of kindness gave Rebecca support. When the company withdrew from the breakfast table, Sir Ambrose requested the favour of Rebecca's conversation for a short time ; to refuse was impossible, she therefore remained with much confusion.

Sir Ambrose, now they were alone, laid open his plans respecting their future establishment. He vehemently urged their immediate union, and aware that, from many painful associations, Gloomore Castle could not prove to Lady Berry a desirable residence ; he did not even name it as their future house ; but told her it

was his intention to proceed from York, where they were to be married, to London, and introduce her to such society as was suitable to her rank.

To this plan Rebecca gratefully acceded. On one point, however, they differed, and to which, with resolute firmness, she would not comply. He proposed her dropping the name of Berry, and relinquishing the estates appertaining to the name, rather than not assume his own. It was a name precious to her as the air she breathed; it had been interwoven with the only perfect happiness she had ever tasted. Though not of a sordid nor selfish nature, yet, as the patrimony bestowed upon her by the man she so fondly loved, to abandon it was impossible. It was the tender link which, even in death, seemed yet to bind them together; its very sound was full of that departed love which cherished the fondest remembrance.

By preserving the name she could alone retain the Leicestershire estate, that beautiful place where all her former joys were buried. In the event of resigning her name her property became forfeited. Rebecca promised to marry Sir Ambrose Templeton, and she meant to keep her word; but conscious he had no further claim upon her than as regarded that promise, she remained unshaken respecting a change of name, and he was obliged to yield to her determination, having drawn from her an assurance that she never would visit Westwood Park during his life-time.

The next step Rebecca took was to inform her parents of her intended marriage; she knew the horror it would inspire, for they not only held Sir Ambrose in detestation, but dread. They looked upon him as some malignant being, instigated by an evil spirit. Simple and uneducated, they were weak and superstitious, and from their knowledge of

Sir Ambrose, nothing she was persuaded could convince them, that he was not either a necromancer, or under the influence of the devil. Rebecca considered it a point of duty to herself to make her parents acquainted with her intended change of condition. For that purpose she set out for Green Meadows, within two stages of Sir William Widderington's, accompanied only by her maid.

The worthy couple were transported to see their daughter; it was an unlooked-for joy; but bitter was their sorrow, when she revealed to her father that she was on the point of marriage with Sir Ambrose Templeton.

The venerable, white-haired old man knelt to her in the anguish of the moment. "Do not, do not, I pray you, my dear child, cast yourself away — sell yourself to Beelzebub. I am certain sure he is no better. Are not all the country round affrighted at him, with his

conjurations, and worshipping the moon and stars, instead of God Almighty ?

“ Did he not,” he continued, with emotion, “ spirit you away when a mere baby ; and then, as it should seem, spirit you back, by invoking the wicked one, in the most surprising manner — quite a resurrection — when we thought you, years past, dead and buried ?

“ Rebecca, child,” proceeded the old man, with a determined firmness, that seemed at variance with the anguish of of his mind, “ I would rather, I tell you,” as he clenched his hand, “ follow you to the grave, even now that my eyes are again blessed with the sight of you, than you should be the wife of that profane man.

“ What can you expect,” he continued, with vehemence, earnestly looking with tenderness upon her, “ but that he will hurl you into that pit of fire and brimstone, prepared, as we are told, for the devil and his angels.”

Rebecca was quite subdued, and wept on the breast of her parent, unable to speak. At length she said, in a low voice, "Father, dear father, talk not thus, I implore you; for I have promised, by a solemn vow, which cannot be recalled, to marry Sir Ambrose Templeton. You must, therefore, try to reconcile yourself to an event which must take place, and that immediately."

"More's the sorrow," he returned, in a tone of vexation, as he flung himself from her on the window-seat, in sullen grief. "Well, child," he added, after a considerable pause, taking Rebecca in his arms, "as what cannot be cured, as the saying goes, must be endured, take a father's blessing, though it is a sorrowful one. May God bless and protect you from the evil one. I cannot tell your poor mother your design, for it would go hard with her to break her heart."

The old man again fondly prest Rebecca to his breast; and, as the large

drops fell from his eyes, with a convulsive sob, he rushed from her presence.

Rebecca, quite overcome for some time, remained almost stupified with sorrow. Farmer Russell prevented her mother from seeing her; and at length she was attended by her sister Ruth to the carriage which had brought her to Green Meadows-bank, of which she took a painful farewell.

CHAP. VIII.

LADY Berry having given her consent to marry Sir Ambrose, and, above all little female affectation, allowed him to name the following Thursday for the celebration of their nuptials.

The ceremony was performed by the dean, in the cathedral at York, in the presence of all the Widderington family. Sir William gave away the bride; and his daughter, a pretty blooming girl, officiated as bridesmaid.

They returned, after the ceremony, to Sir William's seat, where a splendid entertainment was provided.

The following day, the prioress took an affectionate leave of her friend, and proceeded to Bristol, and the new-married couple set off for the mansion of Sir Ambrose, in the immediate neighbour-

hood of Whitehall, in the west-end of London.

As Rebecca journeyed southward, a thousand tender, mournful recollections crowded upon her, and almost forced tears from her eyes, though she tried to smile them away. Sir Ambrose was so kind, so entertaining in his conversation, pointing out every object worthy of remark, of antiquity, with its history and origin.

The low-born Rebecca, the child of his early bounty, the creature whom the evil spirit had once so wickedly instigated to destroy, had singularly become his wife. To exalt her, as much as he formerly had attempted to annihilate her, was now his highest aim. To improve her mind, and form her manners, with her quick capacity and docile disposition, he foresaw would be a pleasing task ; and to effect it, was only to introduce Rebecca amongst the assemblage of illustrious personages, whose courtly graces,

wit, and talents so eminently distinguished that era.

As Rebecca's reserve insensibly wore off, Sir Ambrose was not less delighted than surprised to find how much knowledge she had acquired in languages, literature, and female accomplishments, which had not spoiled her artless manners and native simplicity of character. He thought no woman devoid of art ; nor did he believe that truth and candour were natural virtues, until he knew Rebecca.

Sir Ambrose's manners also relaxed into more courtesy ; he was less morose, less abrupt, and contradictory. If he did not praise his wife, he showed that he approved whatever she said or did. Thus, by encouraging, instead of depressing her, she was less timid, and had more self-possession.

In this happy manner they travelled by easy stages to London.

As they entered the great metropolis,

Rebecca scarcely recognised it as the same city she formerly had visited with the Chesterville family. When they proceeded along the Strand towards Charing-cross, and drove past Whitehall, where every thing wore such a courtly aspect, it appeared the very centre of fashion, gaiety, and elegance.

They were set down at a very handsome mansion, with a large parterre before it, filled with a profusion of flowers. The windows looked into St. James's Park, whose long avenues of noble, stately trees, broad gravel walks, unruffled piece of water, and verdant green sward, with the venerable grey towers of Westminster Abbey rising between the opening of the trees, with the grand imposing music of the military band, then playing with its long-sounding drum, tinkling cymbals, tossed gracefully by the blacks, dressed in their high snowy turbans and gorgeous uniforms, made altogether a scene so imposing and delightful, Rebecca was almost

inclined to enquire what part of the metropolis she had formerly inhabited ; for now she saw no long, narrow, close streets, with buildings crowding one upon another, where she could scarcely breathe the air, and where were the busy, bustling faces, which wore such a look of anxiety and care. All the persons she now saw seemed to be loitering about, either for pleasure or in quest of amusement ; some were standing idly conversing, others indolently lolling on benches beneath the cool shade of the trees ; and those who were walking appeared not as passengers on business.

Rebecca was in truth transported into a new world. She could scarcely believe the splendid mansion into which she stepped she was to command for her own, as she surveyed the costly furniture, and the tasteful arrangement of every thing for use as well as ornament.

Sir Ambrose had been lucky in obtaining the house by the sudden death of a

lady of quality, its late possessor. His agent bargained for it as it stood, including the furniture, and the compact was speedily settled.

Novelty, to young persons of vivid imaginations, is always accompanied with the happiest sense of enjoyment. For it not only views all the eye takes in with peculiar delight, but it tinges every thing around with a brighter colouring than the reality actually possesses. Hence it would be almost cruel to destroy the innocent, pure enjoyment, if not too much bordering on romantic enthusiasm, when life is so replete with bitterness and disappointment.

Rebecca almost wished for some of her young female friends, who would have participated in her admiration of all around; for to Sir Ambrose she was timid of expressing what she felt. He had not, however, been an indifferent spectator; and said, with a half-smile of complacency, "I perceive you like our

new residence. If you are not happy, it shall not be my fault. I am glad to find London will not prove displeasing to you."

"That it cannot," Rebecca replied, warmly pressing Sir Ambrose's hand; "I should indeed be ungrateful not to feel more than pleased, when surrounded by all that appears so delightful. What a scene of gaiety this park presents."

"In fact," he returned, "it often proves so. This spot may almost be said to be the centre of the court, or its leading pathway. It is not unusual to see our merry monarch ambulating here, with one or other of his facetious, witty courtiers. But more of him anon."

The establishment of Sir Ambrose's household was numerous, and suitable in all respects to his rank and handsome fortune.

Rebecca's sudden change of condition had not, as yet, been communicated to

her motherly friend, Mrs. Chesterville. The speed with which every thing was concluded, together with the hurry and agitation of her spirits, prevented Lady Berry's writing into Lancashire. She also was withheld from another motive, until the ceremony had taken place. Sensible that her promise to become the wife of Sir Ambrose Templeton, in case the ring should ever be found, would only distress her friends when such an event was actually to take place, she dreaded their interference and endeavours to prevent the fulfilment of a vow which they might consider could not be binding. But as Rebecca had so solemnly pledged herself to be his wife, so did she solemnly resolve to accomplish that promise. When the ceremony was passed, they, like her humble parents, must be reconciled to the event.

She now took up the pen, and wrote to Mrs. Chesterville as follows :—

“ *To Mrs. Chesterville.*

“ London, 16—.

“ You will, I am afraid, my dear respected Mrs. Chesterville, chide your Rebecca for want of friendship and confidence, that I had not earlier communicated my change of condition. Yet impute not want of deference to your advice, that I have, till now, withheld the intelligence that I am the wife of Sir Ambrose Templeton.

“ You witnessed the condition on which I gave my promise. The *Ring*, consigned to the ocean, by a seeming miracle was found as *predicted*; therefore, nothing but an act of impiety could withhold my consent to unite my destiny with that of Sir Ambrose.

“ Such being the case, I would not put it in your power to dissuade me from an act which, not to have acceded to, would have been most dishonourable.

“ Acquit me then, dear Mrs. Chester-

ville, of disrespect to a friend I so entirely love and respect.

“I have hitherto no reason to regret my change of condition. Sir Ambrose is affectionate and indulgent.

“We have a magnificent mansion in what is called the court-end of the town — quite a different-looking part to where I was with you. Indeed, it is a new world to the simple, ignorant Rebecca, who, it seems, is soon to be introduced to all that polished circle that flutters round the throne of our gay monarch. I am afraid I shall make but a silly figure in the midst of all the handsome, courtly dames by whom Charles is surrounded. They will laugh and sneer at the awkward country bumpkin. But if Sir Ambrose does not blush for his wife, I shall then carry my head as high as the proudest.

“I write to my dear Juliet by the same post.

“God bless you, my kind, respected

Mrs. Chesterville, and your most excellent husband.

“Yours, with respect and truth,

“REBECCA BERRY.”

Sir Ambrose Templeton spared no expence for the fashionable and handsome equipment of his wife. He presented her with a splendid set of pearls, and his equipage was one of the finest in town.

CHAP. IX.

SIR Ambrose Templeton aspired to the acquaintance of Lady Cordelia Trevillion for Rebecca, as the most brilliant, accomplished, and polished woman of the age. Her wit, her vivacity, her attainments, while they inspired envy, yet made her universally talked of, followed, and admired. Though somewhat difficult of access, her doors were open to all that constellation of talent which blazed round the Court of Charles the Second. Not even the reigning favourites of that court ranked more high in popularity and fashion, than this captivating woman.

Pre-eminently gifted with attractions the most powerful, she had only to appear, to draw around her a crowd of admirers. It was not her beauty, for she certainly was not beautiful; but it

was that *tout ensemble* there is no defining, which taking the heart, the senses by surprise, rendered captive all those who came within the influence of her magic circle.

Lady Cordelia Trevillion and Sir Ambrose had made an accidental acquaintance in the country, a sufficient sanction, he considered, for now introducing to her his lady.

Accordingly, a few days after their arrival in London, they drove to the Lady Cordelia's splendid mansion at Whitehall.

On being announced, Sir Ambrose and Lady Berry were immediately admitted.

Rebecca's knowledge of life was very limited ; and her little world and opinions were formed within the narrow circle of those with whom she had associated. She believed her late friend, Lady Frances Elton, had reached the very standard of perfection in all that was elegant, accomplished, and excellent in woman,

until the present moment, when she felt dazzled, surprised, abashed. Had her fancy created such a being as she now beheld, she would have smiled at a vision so unlike any thing she had ever before seen, or ever could see again.

Lady Cordelia's manners, wit, vivacity, and conversation, partook of all the grace, ease, and flattery of a court, beneath whose adulation she had always lived : she was allied to the highest of its nobility. Though sincerity and truth guided whatever she said, from a native frankness of character, yet her language was so complimentary and conciliating, her manners so caressing, Rebecca coloured with confusion, and became embarrassed and distressed.

Sir Ambrose presented his wife, Lady Berry, and, half aside, explained why she bore not the name of Templeton.

The Lady Cordelia gracefully held out her hand to bid Rebecca welcome, but she instantly withdrew it in timid confusion,

as she said in her soft wooing voice, smiling upon her, "I am but too happy to see you here. It is kind in Sir Ambrose to bring one so new, and so pretty. Though I doubt whether one-half of the court of Charles will feel equally his debtor.

"Don't you think so?" added the Lady, familiarly addressing a young person, who was employed at the table copying some MS. papers.

Sir Ambrose, half smiling, but not quite pleased, replied, "Lady, you will spoil my simple, unsophisticated wife with compliments to which she is quite unused."

"Oh no," she answered again in her winning way, taking Lady Berry's hand, "you do not think so; I cannot spoil her; I am sure I cannot," earnestly regarding her with tender interest, as she fixed her large beautiful eyes upon her.

Whatever might be Sir Ambrose's opinion as to the unspoilable qualities of his

wife, he confined it to a dubious twitch of the tassels of his collar, and an involuntary glance at the palace window, opposite to which he was standing.

The Lady Cordelia, who did not see, or who did not choose to notice those evolutions, exclaimed, "Oh no! who would be so barbarous as to spoil any thing half so beautiful; it would be too cruel." When, as if to give a practical refutation to her assertion, the door opened, and the Duke of Buckingham was announced, whose eyes, as he bowed to Lady Cordelia, did their best to flatter Lady Berry. The dislike Sir Ambrose would have felt to the gay Duke's acquaintance, was quite overcome by the veneration he entertained for the man who had nearly arrived at a successful conclusion of his pursuit of the philosopher's stone; and Buckingham, on his part, as soon as he discovered the baronet to be the spouse of the beautiful Lady Berry, was not long in exerting all

his alchymy of manner to gild his failings with the husband, for the sake of gaining some golden opportunities of ingratiating himself with the wife ; and so nicely did he analyze the astrologer's character, and so judiciously did he humour his foibles, and put him upon his hobby, that, in the first quarter of an hour, the wily Duke ranked as a demigod in the opinion of Sir Ambrose. When he perceived that he was perfectly established in his good graces, he then, and not till then, addressed his conversation to the ladies.

A pause ensued in the conversation, during which Rebecca took a survey of the apartment, as singular in its arrangement as its singular possessor.

The furniture was costly, and of superb materials: the oak wainscoting, adorned with valuable pictures, executed by the most eminent masters ; and in several compartments were arranged handsome bound books.

Before the fire-place lay extended two large pet dogs ; on a velvet cushion slept one of the favourite breed of the reigning monarch, a black, sleek-haired spaniel. Books of every size and description were scattered on a large table, with implements for drawing, and some beautiful sketches of figures, fancifully grouped together, in an unfinished state.

Rebecca next transferred her observation to the owner, who stood at the table in a graceful attitude, turning over some prints ; Sir Ambrose was looking at the Duke ;—her height was just what it should be, neither diminutive nor too tall ; she moved like a sylph, so light, so graceful were all her footsteps ; yet there was a certain dignity of carriage, a loftiness without pride, that marked her of noble birth ; and, though truth and candour were seated on her brow,

“ The brow was queen-like, somewhat proud,
But this seem’d as it were of right allow’d.”

Her complexion was fair ; the contour of her face good, though her features were not cast in that strict line of beauty formed for the chisel. No face so perpetually varied in expression, as mind, words, and thought directed that expression. In her beautiful large dark eyes every feeling of her heart spoke eloquently, was it either to the melting touch of sorrow, or changed into that gay vivacity of character which seemed to be most natural ; her mouth, her smiles, her teeth, were the perfection of loveliness ; her golden hair clustered in ringlets over her fair forehead, unconfined by any head-dress ; in her soft, sweet voice there was witchery.

“ That low tone,
Melting as woman’s love, or pity’s own ;
Like silver tuned to music, or a bird
Gifted with human language, but each word,
As sweet as any note that might belong
To the first murmur of a minstrel’s song.”

Yet it was not the voice alone, it was

the sense, the wit that accompanied all she uttered. But

“ Her likeness, why it is a vain endeavour
To image it, painting or words may never
Say what she was.”

Yet she was not perfect ; high spirited, tender, ardent, frank, sincere, unguided by prudence, she was the creature of impulse and of feeling ; and, from viewing mankind through the medium of her own excellence, she was unguarded where she ought to have been prudent ; unsuspicious where she ought to have been cautious. Whatever failings she possessed, she had not the art to conceal, but, like the deep shadows which blend with the rich colouring of a fine picture, only gave additional lustre to its outline.

Decked by the Graces, they were her hand-maids ; though born and bred in courts, fashion had not spoiled her ; and if she sometimes unwarily caught its insinuating tone, she disdained its artifice.

her heart was meltingly alive to charity ; she never heard a tale of distress with indifference ; she sought out the object and alleviated its affliction ; for the milk of human kindness flowed in her bosom.

Yet a strange weakness in her character often induced her to be most guided, or rather influenced by the counsel of persons whose understandings she most despised, and which were as inferior to her own, as gold ore to brass metal.

“ I am come,” said Buckingham, who was the first to break the silence, starting from his reverie, “ on the part of Miss Hamilton (who is now at Lady Chesterfield’s, laughing most immoderately) to know if Lady Cordelia Trevilion will go there, and hear of two of the best jokes that ever were played off on two people, whose destiny appears to be that of being laughed at, and most amply have they fulfilled it.”

“ Tell me who the unfortunates are,

that I may know whether it is worth my while to go," said the lady.

"I was told not," said the Duke, "that you might enjoy the jest the more; but your wishes are my laws, and as transgressing them incurs the too severe penalty of your displeasure, I must e'en tell you. What think you of a *parti quarré*, composed of Lady Muskerri, Miss Price, Miss Blague, and the Marquis de Brisacier?"

"Oh delightful," cried Lady Cordelia, "I'll go directly, and Lady Chesterfield too; you *must* go with me," she added, turning to Lady Berry; "she is such a nice woman; I like her; and though the people do laugh at her about her thick ankles, and her green stockings, I'm sure there's no harm in it; *she* can't help having feet like an elephant." And as she spoke, she involuntarily displayed the prettiest little foot in the world. "Come," she continued, taking Lady Berry's hand, "come with me,

will you? while I put on my things; Miss Hamilton and Lady Chesterfield will be so glad to see you."

"But I do not know them," said Rebecca, hesitatingly, "and they may think it odd my going."

At this piece of *naïveté* Lady Cordelia laughed not a little, and then said, "I beg your pardon for laughing, but I cannot help it, you are so unlike your husband. *He* won't allow any thing to be strange, even if the heavens were to fall; and *you*, like my dog Fidel, (who passes his whole life in astonishment at the evolutions of his own tail,) think every thing strange."

"And you the strangest of all," rejoined Lady Berry; "for I have never seen any thing like you."

"Well, never mind, only don't laugh at Lady Chesterfield's fine green stockings."

When Lady Cordelia was equipped, they returned to the saloon, where they found Buckingham and Sir Ambrose

again deeply engaged, gesticulating out their chemical lore at one another. — “No doubt the effect of caloric, in that case, would be double,” said Sir Ambrose, as they entered.

“Never mind the effect of caloric,” said Lady Cordelia, who overheard this last sentence, “but let us make haste and hear the effect of Miss Hamilton’s joke; for I am dying to know what it is.”

They had not twenty yards to walk to Lady Chesterfield’s house, where there soon occurred fresh matter for surprise to Lady Berry, and mirth to Lady Cordelia.

They were ushered into a handsome suite of rooms; in which, however, they did not wait long, before a page entered, to beg they would follow him to his lady’s dressing-room. They passed through two or three rooms, and, when arrived at the last, the page threw open a door.

Lady Berry was not a little surprised to find that Buckingham and Sir Am-

brose, instead of remaining where they were, also entered.

The room was of oak, and very spacious, the sun streamed along the inlaid floor in prismatic colours, through the high, painted windows. The air was perfumed with the breath of real flowers, that were scattered in profusion round the room, and whose tints were reflected back by innumerable mirrors. At the upper end of the room was an eider-down couch, covered with rose-coloured satin and silver, on which reposed, in unconscious luxury, some half dozen of puppies, with their long-eared mamma. The chairs and foot-stools were of the same material, but resembled in shape the shell-car in which Venus is represented as having risen from the sea. The bath, which stood at one end of the apartment, was a large marble bason, in the centre of which played a fountain of perfumed water, over which a marble Amphitrite presided; and the floor round the bath

was thickly strewed with rose-leaves, that reached half way up it. The light came with a soft glow through the rose-coloured curtains, and fell lovelily on objects scarcely less brilliant than itself. Before the centre window was a toilet, on which lay, in happy confusion, billets-doux, letters, jewels, rouge, and essences. The glass was in the form of a heart, set in silver, richly chased with flowers, and supported by silver Cupids, who with one hand pointed inward towards the mirror, as if at the face it reflected, whilst the other held a torch, which at night emitted light; the arrows in their quivers were so many silver pens. At one end of the toilet lay a guitar; and on a table near it was a profusion of fruit in silver baskets, with wine and flowers. Before the mirror sat the beautiful green-stockinged Lady Chesterfield. A morning-dress of green lute-string half concealed, half displayed her figure; behind her chair stood an abigail, adjusting the bur-

nished ringlets of her luxuriant hair; and at her feet were a mask and a fan, which a little dog was doing his best to pull to pieces. Whilst by her side sat Francisco Corbetta, a dingy-looking Italian, from whom she was taking a lesson on the guitar, and who was beating time most indefatigably, while she sang.

At the other end of the table sat the lovely Hamilton, with her *petit nez retroussé*, threatening mischief to the whole world in general, and a few individuals in particular; on her lap lay several pairs of military gloves, with a quantity of pale yellow ribbon; and in her hand was one of the before-mentioned silver arrows, speeding her errand of mischief, in the form of a billet-doux, which she was very busily inditing.

Lady Chesterfield ceased singing as Lady Cordelia and Lady Berry entered.

When the latter had presented her fair friend to the former, she sprang forward, and, looking over Miss Hamilton's

shoulder, cried out, “Ah, *petite maligne!* what is it now?”

“Look at these sulphurous streamers,” said the beauteous Hamilton, holding up the citron-coloured ribbon in triumph, “and for one moment picture to yourself the *tête-de-veau au naturel* of the insipid Blague, decorated with them; but that is not all; it would be nothing if they were not a *gage d’amour* — so I have taken the liberty of sending an anonymous billet with them, which she will infallibly attribute to the Marquis de Brisacier, who has done as much to turn her brain, as yon noble Duke has,” (pointing to Buckingham,) “to turn his; and to decide the matter at once, there are many eulogiums on her *jolis yeux de marcassin*, and a request that she will allow the accompanying happy gloves to kiss the fairest hands in the world; and the ribbon to decorate the most lovely of heads, at the Queen’s masquerade next week. But as love is

nothing without jealousy, I am now dispatching a similar present, with a fac-simile of this billet, to Miss Price, as she and the young wild boar's eyes are not only at daggers drawn about Dongan, but are both candidates for the Marquis's admiration, and both equally deserving of it; for if Blague wants the wit of Price, her long white eyelashes give more than equal point to her glances, though I am afraid the Marquis's love is above Price," continued Miss Hamilton, laughing, and looking archly at Lady Cordelia; "but only fancy the volley of indignation that will assail the unconscious Marquis, when each of these damsels find themselves equal participators in his present."

Lady Cordelia was enchanted at the frolic, and laughed immoderately, as her imagination conjured up the resentment of the rival frights and the astonishment of the guiltless Brisacier.

"Oh, keep your laughter for my

chef-d'œuvre," said Miss Hamilton, "which is the trick I have played off on my cousin Muskerry. You know her mania for dancing; but at all events her Lord does; and dreading the ridiculous figure she would make in the eyes of the whole world, he entreated the Queen not to send her an order for the masquerade; but I, taking compassion on her, sent her one about three hours ago, commanding her to appear in the costume of a Babylonian princess; and not an hour since she was with me in an ecstasy of delight, at not only going to the ball, but cheating her husband into the bargain. She told me she had in vain gone to all the merchants in the town trading to the Levant, to discover how they dressed in Babylon, and asked me if I could inform her. You may be sure I lost no time in instructing her how to attire à la Babylonian; and therefore you may reckon on her appearance being complete. But now comes the best part

of the story. She had not left me ten minutes before in came Lord Muskerry, to know if there was any ball going to be given in the city; for that his wife was making great preparations for making a fool of herself somewhere; but," added he, "as I have taken care it should not be at Court, I do not much mind."

Whilst the fair quartette were laughing heartily at the poor Princess of Babylon's * expense, Buckingham had retired into a window with Sir Ambrose, where he was inveighing against the degeneracy of the times, as though he had been a saint; and among other enormities, particularly reprobated that very licence of manners which sanctioned their being where they then were. This last piece of appropriate morality completed his conquest of Sir Ambrose, who quitted him with reluctance, when Lady Cordelia rose to depart.

* Vide Count A. Hamilton's Memoirs of the Comte de Gramont.

“ Thanks,” said Buckingham, in a whisper to Lady Chesterfield, as he passed her, pointing to the mirror on the toilette, “ thanks for retaining the effigy of my heart, as well as the original.”

“ Why the effigy of *your* heart in particular?” asked the Lady.

“ Because,” replied the Duke, “ it reflects *your* image more *constantly* than any other.”

“ Rather say,” said she, “ that it is like your heart; because it reflects every form and retains none; and because love is for ever stationed near it, but never enters it.”

“ I’ll not dispute the matter with you,” said Buckingham, executing one of his most tender sighs, “ for it was so short a time in my possession, and has been so long a one in *yours*, that *you*, who regulate its every movement, ought certainly to know more about it than I do who have not the slightest control over it.”

The beauty tossed her pretty head with a laugh, half believing, half incredulous, as the Duke, bowing to Miss Hamilton, left the room to join his party, who had reached the court-yard ; and linking his arm within that of Sir Ambrose, with very unusual want of gallantry, left the two ladies to walk by themselves.

“ Do many persons associate with Lady Chesterfield ?” asked Rebecca, hesitatingly, after they had walked a little way.

“ Yes ; every body,” said Lady Cordelia ; “ but why ?”

“ Oh, nothing,” replied Lady Berry, “ only it was so odd her letting the Duke of Buckingham and Sir Ambrose into her dressing-room.”

“ There, *odd* again,” said Lady Cordelia, laughing, but added with a sigh, “ ah ! you will soon learn to think nothing odd in this naughty town.”

So saying, she arrived at her own

house, where the friends separated, Lady Cordelia promising to call, and take Lady Berry to the theatre in the evening.

Rebecca, in her way home, was lavish in praise and admiration of the Lady Cordelia Trevillion.

“Women,” Sir Ambrose replied, “are in general so full of vanity, levity, and folly, that, with the present exception, I scarce know one in the court of our present monarch I would choose for your intimate associate. The great charm of Lady Cordelia consists in her having nothing artificial about her. You see her always in heart, mind, and manners such as she really is, a genuine character.

“She attempts nothing,” he continued, “she does not execute to perfection, nor affects any thing she does not understand. She speaks, reads, writes various languages, with the fluency and elegance of a native; she is celebrated for the taste, pathos, and beauty of her reading; her music speaks to the heart;

her painting lives, nay almost breathes on the canvass."

"How ignorant," exclaimed Rebecca, "how unworthy must Lady Cordelia consider me of her acquaintance!"

"Not at all; but in short, Rebecca, she is a most graceful, perfect creature, as far as personal and mental attainments reach. But your sex are not to be trusted; you are capricious, wayward, and fickle."

"Yet, Sir Ambrose, you just said, there is nothing artificial about Lady Cordelia."

"Less so than most women, I agree; for she is often very incautious."

"She is a widow; did you know her husband?"

"No; our acquaintance originated in a whimsical circumstance. In travelling through Yorkshire, she expressed a desire to see my orrery, and Lady Cordelia Trevillion is the only female who ever was admitted within a mansion long closed against all visitors. Delighted

with the science she discovered, I promised, if I came to London, to renew our acquaintance; and am glad of the opportunity of presenting my Rebecca.”

Few women, as Sir Ambrose said, can vie with the Lady Cordelia in intellect. The powerful rapidity of her comprehension, on all subjects in which she engages, makes her compass whatever she attempts with a taste and perfection the result of extraordinary genius. That genius is eminently conspicuous in composition, particularly in poetry, which she writes with the beauty, the originality, and true genius of a poet. She paints with the boldness and effect of an artist. In short, she combines all the feminine accomplishments of the lady, with all the attainments of a highly-gifted woman. Hence her talents draw around her the first wit and talent of the age.

It was a brilliant era. The fine arts flourished under the auspices of Mr., afterwards Sir Christopher Wren, the noble

architect of St. Paul's; Dryden, Denham, Butler, the poets; Purcell, the composer, all frequented the mansion of the Lady Cordelia Trevillion, for she loved and appreciated genius of every description, and it was in truth the Temple of Science and the Graces.

The insidious, the fascinating Sir Charles Sedley was not excluded from her magic circle. Lady Cordelia, like all highly-gifted persons, was not insensible to the voice of adulation; from the universal admiration which she inspired, and with the manners herself of a cour-tier, the soft, the insinuating Sir Charles unconsciously pleased her; yet he only pleased her, as a passing gleam of sunshine; for the impression he made was light and frivolous.

The handsome Duke of Buckingham diverted her. His turn for ridicule, his graceful pleasantry, his humourous sayings, and inventive faculty carried her,

in his society, from herself. But he was so generally engrossed with Miss Stewart, it was not often she saw his Grace, except in public.

CHAP. X.

ACCORDING to agreement, Lady Cordelia called for Sir Ambrose and Lady Berry in the evening, to witness the representation of Betterton's Hamlet. She was attended by Sir Charles Sedley.

Rebecca was surprised, after they entered the box, to see Lady Cordelia put on her vizard mask*, as did all the ladies of distinction. Not to look bold or conspicuous, she was obliged to follow the same custom, and wear the one Lady Cordelia gave into her hand; but, as she did so, she could not help hazarding a remark on the strangeness of the fashion.

* “ When the house began to fill, Lady Cromwell put on her vizard mask, and kept it on the whole of the play; which is become the fashion for ladies to hide their faces.”

Pepy's Memoirs.

In her own peculiar way she replied, with emphasis, "Yes, if it were only here that they wore them."

"Only here," interrupted Sir Charles, echoing her last words, as he bent over the lady, as though pouring out a libation at the shrine of a deity.

"Would, that even *here*," he continued, warmly, "some feelings could be masked; but they cannot be subdued."

Perceiving that the fervency of his manner had called the eloquent blood into the cheeks of Lady Cordelia, and attracted the attention of Lady Berry, he artfully passed on to a common-place remark on the fulness of the house, with as much *sang froid* as if he had merely expressed a former hope that Lady Cordelia did not suffer from the heat; and turning abruptly to Lady Berry, devoted his attentions exclusively to her.

Rebecca, between the acts, looked with interest and pleasure on the illustrious assemblage of Royalty and Nobles;

in their Majesties, the Duke of York, Chevalier de Gramont, Prince Rupert, Lady Castlemain, and last, though not least, the interesting Queen of Bohemia.*

Rebecca seemed to be at once transported into a new world. She beheld some of the most brilliant and eminent personages of that gay, licentious court. The wise, the witty, the beautiful, were here assembled. But her eye rested with peculiar interest on the bereaved Queen of Bohemia, whose former splendour and adulation, when now contrasted by cold neglect and comparative penury, touched her deeply.

“You are looking,” exclaimed Lady Cordelia, with a sympathetic eye, in her soft, plaintive voice, “on the poor Queen. How sad she appears. Only those who know what it is to meet reverse

* For a just and affecting portrait of this unfortunate Queen, the reader is referred to Miss Benger’s admirable Memoir of Elizabeth Stuart, of Bohemia.

of fortune — who weep the bitter tears of cold neglect — may guess her present feelings. In all the gay throng by whom she was once surrounded, not one solitary individual now approaches to bestow their benediction on her head.” A heavy sigh stole from the bosom of the lady, who, however, the next minute turned to the flattering Sedley, and uttered some lively sally, with one of her bewitching smiles.

“How beautiful the Gwyn looks to-night,” said the fair Jennings.

“No wonder,” said Brounter, leaning over her, “that she is like another Helen that fired another Troy.”

“Apropos,” interrupted Sir Ambrose, now speaking for the first time, “of firing; it is a pity history has left us in the dark as to the real motive of making Alexander burn Persepolis, for I cannot think it was merely to exert his power.”

“Decidedly not,” returned Sir Charles; “but the reason is so obvious, that his-

tory thought it unnecessary to comment on the subject."

"And what was the reason?" enquired Lady Cordelia, "for really I don't know, though it is so obvious."

"No!" replied Sedley; "why, rely upon it, that Thaïs had discovered that some narrow street contained a handsomer woman than herself."

"Oh! I am sure," exclaimed Lady Cordelia, smiling, "that could not be the case; for there is Lady Berry sitting on a narrow bench next to me, and yet I do not wish to burn the house."

Sir Charles was too finished in his art, to flatter one woman at the expence of another; but no one knew how to look a compliment better, than himself; and at the moment he glanced a slight one at the fair speaker.

If beauty alone constituted attraction, nature had bestowed but a small portion on Sir Charles Sedley; but that little he had put out to such advantage and in-

terest, that few might enter the lists of fascination with him without sustaining a humiliating defeat ; his hair was his chief ornament, and, according to the fashion of the times, fell in luxuriant curls on his shoulders, the dark moustache on his short chiselled upper lip, gave a turn to his smile, that rendered it irresistibly piquant ; his eyes could not in themselves be called handsome, but he had the dangerous power of throwing into them the expression of every sentiment he wished to convey, but could not feel ; his low voice was a perfect illustration of the word *persuasive*. Unlike his contemporaries, his dress was less characterized by its glitter and display, than by its costly simplicity, and studied negligence. Black velvet, unadorned, save by the rich point-falling collar of the day, being his favourite suit, which, as he was fully aware, accorded artfully with the sallow complexion, and rather pensive turn of his countenance. His

attentions to Lady Cordelia were too marked not to be perceived by her; but whether from a spirit of innate coquetry, or that she liked his society, though she did not like him, certain it is, she did not repel advances which she meant not to encourage. And when he asked her if she was to be of the Royal party to Greenwich the next day, she replied, "I have not yet determined;" and then added directly after, "but shall you?" A question which a man, even less vain than Sedley, might certainly have interpreted as complimentary to himself.

"I too am undecided about going," he answered.

"Oh, I think I will go," said Lady Cordelia, "for Lady Berry has never been there, and it is so pretty."

"Then we shall meet," said Sedley, in his low soft voice; and pressing her hand, and bidding her good night, left the box. When he was gone Lady Cor-

delia felt hurt; for she was aware that what she had said must have made him think that her going to Greenwich depended on his being there. “Well, what matter what he thinks,” said she, in answer to her own surmise; and before she got home, *she* had ceased to think about it; and the next day a brilliant sun saw her on her way to Greenwich, forgetting there was such a person as Sedley in existence.

CHAP. XI.

SPORTS and pastimes of every description were carried on at this period with spirit and avidity. The court was variously entertained with promenades, water-parties, and horseback was equally resorted to, *pour passer le temps*. The magnificent Thames was not unfrequently covered with pleasure barges, gay with streamers, and joyous with music, vieing with each other in the beautiful women which they contained, as they glided down the silver current to the soft tones of the flute, or the loudly swelling clarionet, and other wind instruments.

Choice collations were spread for the ladies, who, landing at the broad terrace, spread before the palace at Greenwich, there promenaded, talked, coquetted

amidst the play of fire-works, lending a thousand artificial stars to those heavenly luminaries which glittered in the sky.

Lady Cordelia Trevillion often partook in these pastimes. She was passionately fond of rural amusements, and rural scenes. Poetry and painting had given her a true relish for the beauties of nature, from the magnificent and sublime to all the softer scenery of pastoral life.

Frequently she withdrew from the festive party, leaning on Lady Berry's arm, to the most sequestered path, amidst the green embowering avenues in Greenwich Park; there, remote from public gaze, in pensive rapture she participated along with Rebecca in the admiration which the works of nature inspired when clad in the soft and melancholy repose of descending twilight, the pervading tranquillity seems to lull every turbulent passion to rest, and to breathe

a spirit of peace at once delightful and soothing.

In these feelings Rebecca could warmly participate. Her evening of sadness had fallen upon her in the blooming spring-time of her life, and though she endeavoured to banish the tenderness with which she cherished the memory of her late husband, yet there were hours and seasons when his spirit seemed again to mingle with her kindred one.

There was a sympathetic feeling, a romantic enthusiasm in the character of the Lady Cordelia, at once dangerous and attaching, which had instantaneously won on the simple unsophisticated Rebecca.

As their intimacy increased, Lady Berry frequently detected her interesting friend in tears; but the profound silence she preserved whence their source, prevented her, from a feeling of delicacy, enquiring the cause.

The frank simplicity of Rebecca's character insensibly had blended, like a kindred spirit, with the Lady Cordelia's. In her she beheld a creature unassisted by art. Fresh, lovely, and graceful, as some new-born flower—Oh! how unlike those studied court butterflies, which daily shone in borrowed lustre beneath a dazzling sun.

They viewed together, from one of the beautiful elevations in Greenwich Park, the grandeur of the winding river, meandering between the green pastures; and in conversation sometimes lost themselves amidst the sequestered avenues of trees which stretch in various directions. Formerly, in this spot, Lady Cordelia had experienced moments of bliss never to be recalled. The remembrance brought tears into her eyes, and dejected and oppressed, she entreated Lady Berry to join the mingled groups of young beauties and gay cavaliers, that were

scattered through the park, and promised soon to follow. She felt sick at heart, and desired, for a few minutes, to be alone, that she might regain her composure.

Rebecca was timid, and reluctant to depart ; she, however, retreated to a short distance, not wholly losing sight of Lady Cordelia.

A heavy sigh, which escaped on the retrospection of past happiness, was answered by one breathed so near her, that she quickly rose from the bench on which she sat, and beheld Sir Charles Sedley leaning against a tree, with folded arms, his hat drawn over his forehead, and his large penetrating eyes steadfastly fixed upon her.

Lady Cordelia, as he advanced, bowed slightly, and somewhat haughtily, and would have passed on, but he sprang forward, and throwing himself at her feet, abruptly seized both her hands.

“Dearest, best beloved, Lady Cordelia,” he exclaimed, with fervour, “hear me,” (as she struggled to be free) “only hear the overflowings of a heart which knows no other joy but you. I have loved you as none ever loved before—when I sleep you are my dream — when I wake it is you I worship. You are, and ever will be, time, space, and eternity to me. No wonder, then, that all nature wears a lovelier aspect in my sight, since nature’s self is tinged with you. No wonder then I became so kind to all the world, since you were all the world to me. If, unlike others, I have not profaned with rhymes those charms which no words may praise, and the still air has not echoed with your name, it is because that name’s my wealth; and what miser trusts his treasure to the winds?”

“Talk not thus wildly,” interrupted the lady with impatience, “but rise,

Sir Charles, I entreat, nor thus rudely detain me here. This is no place for language so displeasing to mine ear, nor will I listen to you."

"No place," cried he, passionately, "more so! Are not these friendly trees reverberant with lovers' sighs? The vows I plight are love's offering, and nature's shrine is here."

"Love's rhapsodies, you mean," replied Lady Cordelia scornfully, forcibly withdrawing her hand from his iron grasp. "Detain me not, Sir Charles Sedley," she continued, "your language is too bold, your presence most intrusive."

"Methinks," he said, as he slowly rose, "that command, that look of scorn, suits not the soft, the wooing manner of the Lady Cordelia Trevillion, who, by that command, may crush indeed, but not my spirit, and though now you spurn a heart you so wantonly have tortured, smile and triumph over the deso-

lation you have made, despise the passion your witchery has created, make me forget myself, but never *you*. Yet mark me, proud lady," he continued, almost choaking with indignation, "when love exists no longer, hatred usurps its place, and can and will achieve in vengeance more than love could dare."

"Your tone, Sir Charles, is high and insolent. But attempt, nay even achieve all you threaten, for I defy your malice and your vengeance."

"Say you so, lady. Then 'tis as I long have guessed. For that stripling son of Ormond's, I am spurned—rejected. But time, nor distance, nor coast, nor camp, shall intercept my vengeance. 'Tis he, forsaken, can make your gentle heart-strings thrill to the light notes of a guitar better than I can. 'Tis he can send sweeter songs through the midnight air to woo you from your slumbers, charm you with sonnets, that to others had been love's offerings a thousand times before.

Considering," he proceeded, " that this stripling boy, this pretty faced Ossory is fortune's minion ; he bears his fortune meekly, wearing his conquests lightly as a summer garment. But, lady," Sir Charles continued, " for one so proud it excites my special wonder, you thus can waste your bloom in grief for one who leaves you for the frivolous court of France ; where, if report speaks truth, he makes your love a stepping-stone for future victory."

Never before had the Lady Cordelia's mortification and displeasure been so strongly excited. She scarcely could restrain from a passionate burst of tears, but endeavouring to command herself, she indignantly exclaimed, "'Tis false."

" And is it false too," vehemently he interrupted, " that you love him ?"—while his keen eye surveyed her.

Lady Cordelia was ready to sink—the colour mounted, like crimson, to her

cheeks ; her eyes sparkled with displeasure and indignation, as with spirit, though in a subdued voice, she replied, " Your interrogations, Sir, are as unanswerable, as inexplicable, as yourself."

" Silence is then a tacit assent, and I must withdraw my claims to a prize so peerless." With a malignant laugh, while a ghastly paleness flitted round his mouth, Sir Charles was withdrawing from the presence of Lady Cordelia, when he was alarmed by observing all colour had died away from her cheek, and for a moment, all sense of feeling was suspended, but the next, tears gushed in torrents from her eyes, and she sank overwhelmed on the bench beside her.

Sedley was touched by her sufferings ; he had quite subdued the lady, and he was relapsing into his former passionate tenderness, and would have supported her, but she broke hastily from him, and with the swiftness of a fawn, she fled

towards the spot where she sought and found Lady Berry.

In the act of retreat, the links of a slight chain, of curious workmanship, which Lady Cordelia always wore, gave way, broke, and fell to the ground.—Sedley seized it, and was going to follow her, and present it, when he felt his arm detained, and on looking up, perceived the Duke of Buckingham peering into his face with an expression ludicrous, arch, and provoking.

He started back, and frowning darkly, mechanically placed his hand upon his sword, whilst with the other he slowly adjusted his disarranged collar.

“Keep your good steel for better work, our tongues are sharp enough for this encounter, in all conscience; even *if it be* such a mighty crime, for one of his Majesty’s most loyal subjects to come within a hundred yards of another, in a place that is not sacred to any one of them in particular.”

“ My dear Duke,” said Sedley, holding out his hand, and now perceiving, for the first time, the absurd appearance his anger must have given him, “ I—I—that is, I mean, have you been long here ?”

“ Why,” replied his Grace, linking one arm through Sedley’s, and fanning with the white plume of his hat, which he held in his other hand, the dust from his crimson boot, “ not *very* long—about half an hour—but, by my faith, I’m deuced long ; you should have found your “ *dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,*” by no means “ *dulce loquentem,*” to-day. I see you look surprised at the accuracy of my information, but thanks to yonder oak, (which, by the way, is worthy of being palace to old Rowly himself,) I heard all, and saw as good a scene as any play-goer could desire,—*you* acted your part to the life,—the lady, *her’s*, by no means badly ; looking most beauteous

in her scorn ;—in good sooth, you would both shine at the Duke's house."

" I have often heard," said Sedley, making a full stop, and disengaging his arm from his companion's, " I have often heard that the Duke of Buckingham's jests, even when well executed, were always ill-timed, and beneath him ; but to become an eaves-dropper, in order to gratify an unwarrantable and paltry curiosity, *this* is descending too low."

" There you are wrong," said the Duke, folding his arms with the utmost *sang froid*, while he put on one of his equivocal smiles, " for I never was more *in alto* in my life, that being one of the highest trees in the park—and as for eavesdropping, I was only *leaves* dropping, and acorn dropping too, as I honourably showered down both in abundance, to try and make you aware that you had an auditor, who, not being there by design, had no wish to possess himself of your secrets ; but you were too intent on other

matters, there was no getting you to notice me or my ambassadors, the leaves and acorns ;—but as it has so fallen out, you may thank your stars the whole business rests in such *prudent* hands.”

“ And if you were not there by design,” said Sedley, “ pray, may I ask, if you can explain how you came there at all ?”

“ Easily—I was there on a mission from Miss Stewart.”

“ From Miss Stewart ! on an embassy then, I suppose, to Oberon or Queen Mab ?”

“ Neither the one nor the other ; the matter is easily explained—you know how childish she is in all things ; you also know her passion for mimicry ; well, after making me take off that pompous ass, Arlington, the whole way from London to Greenwich, till the very waters echoed with her laughter, who should we meet, on landing, but Arlington himself, who began telling her a long story

about the wonderful effect nightingales' eggs had upon the voice ; and she having last night been sent some new French Romances by Miss Hamilton, and borrowed Lady Chesterfield's wonderful guitar, * nothing would satisfy her but to send me in quest of nightingales' eggs. In vain I assured her that *her's* was one of those exquisite voices that could not be improved ; but, out upon her, the tiresome jade would not believe me ; for Reason, as ill luck will have it, never pays her solitary visit to a silly woman, but at the very moment she should not. So I had nothing for it, but to hie me away to the green-wood tree. Ar't satisfied now ?”

“ ’Tis a *well told* tale,” said Sedley,

* Guitars were little known, and less played upon in England, till one Francisco Corbeta, an Italian, (in 1665,) excelling on the instrument, it became greatly the fashion in London, and Lady Chesterfield had, at this time, the best guitar in England.

with one of his deliberate smiles, that seemed to imply more faith in the expedience of what he had heard, than in its truth.

“Nay, then, for that matter,” replied Buckingham, folding his arms, and looking fixedly in his face, “I should like to know if you could tell *your* tale as well?”

“I crave your Grace’s meaning in a less oracular form; lacking, as I do, withal a wit to cope with your’s.”

“*My* meaning is plain, but Sir Charles Sedley’s, I own, I was at a loss to comprehend, when he so familiarly coupled the Earl of Ossory’s name with the mention of *red right hands*, not half an hour since, to the Lady Cordelia Trevillion.

“It was Sedley’s way, whether his weapon were his tongue or his sword, always to inflict his wounds in the most vital place;”—and after measuring the Duke, from head to foot, with his keen insolent eye, he said, in that cold deliberate tone, it was his wont to assume

on such occasions, knowing full well that the taunting calmness of the injurer never fails to exasperate the injured, till he himself appears in the wrong, —

“ I should have thought, the great loss *Lady Shrewsbury* must have experienced from the absence of the handsome Sidney, (as the women call him,) and his attentions, would have fully explained my allusion to Lord Ossory.”

Buckingham bit his lip ; his sword was half unsheathed ; but whether it was that his love (if love he could) for Lady Shrewsbury was on the wane, (that fair being who had, indeed, been *too dear* to him, since she had run him a hundred and sixty thousand pounds in debt)—or whether conscience at this moment conjured up the manes of her Lord, and that he thought one effectual duel was enough to answer for — or that he was deep in the pursuit of some new whim — or that all these cogent reasons together conspired to assuage his indignation ; —

certain it is, his sword was almost instantly returned to its scabbard, and striking his hand two or three times slowly on the hilt, he merely said, "Ah—then you are one of those who believe in the ridiculous report of the duel between Lord Ossory and Robert Sidney?"

"And why not? neither the one nor the other have ever been heard of since the night of the affray at the Tower."

"Not so," replied the Duke, "Ossory *has been* in France on a private mission to the King from our master here,—which, if I knew the purports, it behoves me not to disclose,—and as for Sidney he is at this very time we are speaking at Penshurst, living on memory, green trees, and moonlight."

"And the duel?"—

"Never took place."

Here Buckingham, for reasons best known to himself, thought fit to put an end to the conversation; and espying

the King at the end of a convenient vista, (through which he was not to be seen,) seemed equally to dispense with apology or explanation from Sedley for the manner in which he had spoken of Lord Ossory. — And holding out one finger to him, and nodding an adieu, said, “the King — good bye,” but turning back, he added — “Sed, you’ll sup with me to-night at York Place? — no revel.”

“Can’t,” said Sedley, “must be at Spring Gardens before night.”

“Then you’ll go with me to the mask at Whitehall this day week?” urged the Duke, — the other assented; and so these two worthies parted, who not ten minutes before had been for running each other through the body. — Sedley stood looking after him for a few minutes; and then exclaiming, “An enigma even to me—by George,” — walked on, not exactly determined where. — While the gay Duke, “not one but all

mankind's epitome," strode away, treading the green grass haughtily, swinging his plumed hat in one hand, whilst he waged war with the tassels of his point collar with the other; and leant his head continually back or forward as occasion required, to look through every tree he passed; — till he not only saw the fair Stewart, (with the King and a large party,) but heard her silly laugh — "So!" said he, untying his cloak, and flinging it on the ground, while he climbed an oak, "I must be very busy looking for these same nightingales' eggs, and as well in an oak as any where else; even if I break my neck by clambering seventy times higher than the highest card castle I ever built thee, thou beauteous piece of folly, whom men call Stewart; for with old Rowly to back thee, I might as well part with my dukedom, as avoid doing thy worst bidding, thou most exquisite of all unreasonables." — So saying, he reached a

tolerably high branch, and seating himself thereon, began singing, “ ’Twas as it fell upon a day, in the merry, merry month of May,” &c.—“ Ha! a rare bird that, (said the King, coming quite under the tree) that gives us words as well as musick; but what have we here?— (turning the Duke’s cloak over with the point of his sword) no doubt some of the bird’s plumage.” “ What bird *can* it be?” enquired the Stewart, infinitely delighted at the idea of Buckingham’s being up in “ *a great tree*, and the King’s calling him a *bird*,” as she afterwards confessed.

“ If this be any of his plumage,” said Ralph Montagu, taking up the crimson cloak, “ he must be a Flamingo.”

“ Or a *humming* bird,” said Sir Charles Berkeley, with a laugh at his own wit.

“ Or a *starling*,” ventured Killegrew, pointing to the star on the mantle.

“ Pshaw” cried the King, who, next to high treason, considered punning the

most atrocious crime any one could be guilty of. — “Now what sort of bird do you think *I* take it to be?” said Lord Arlington, in a stage whisper to Lady Castlemaine. “Oh, I don’t know,” said the malicious beauty, looking most wickedly arch at the pompous peer; “but I should think *you* thought it a *mocking bird*.” This sally caused, as it was intended, a general laugh at Lord Arlington’s expence; — whether *he* felt the full force of the equivoque or not, it is certain the rest did; and even Buckingham from his tree joined in their mirth — and sent down a “Brava! brava! Cara,” to Lady Castlemaine,—and then descending himself, he knelt before Miss Stewart, bearing, as he said, a message to her from the nightingales, which he gave with much mock solemnity in the following words: “Most gracious lady, to every nightingale dwelling in or about this goodly park I have made known your wishes — yet have

they each individually, and all collectively refused to send you a single egg; — not, however, from any disobliging spirit among them, and least of all from indifference to the commands of so fair a lady, but they are marvellously good logicians — and one old nightingale (who looked like a chancellor) quite threw me off my guard, by asking if we of the better world did not think Miss Stewart's voice sweeter than any nightingale's? There could be but one answer to this; and when I had made it, then, said the old bird, of what use can our eggs be to her? None, on the score of improvement, cried I, as I took the liberty of observing to my liege lady before I set out; but if it be her *wish*, that is all sufficient; but the birds," continued the Duke, "who are an uncivilized barbarous race, (and whom, were I his Majesty, I should extirpate) did not seem to comprehend my assertion; and I did not *understand their not understanding me*, and was going to

tell them so, when another nightingale, who carried his crest higher than any of them, looking most foolishly wise, (no doubt a chamberlain, said Buckingham, flinging a look at Lord Arlington,) stepped forward, and flapping his wings three times, voted the *one* egg; a sort of neutral measure, that without being sufficient to satisfy me was quite enough to exasperate them.—No, no, no, screamed all the birds at once;—no, said another nightingale, whom I had not seen before, and who, from the dignified ease of his deportment and light load of sense in either eye, I concluded to be the king,—for,” added the duke, (perceiving a cloud on the royal brow, which threatened a storm, and recollecting in time Lord Rochester’s long banishment for his last peccadillo, which was nothing more than when intending to regale the king with a lampoon on the Duke of Richmond, showing him by mistake one on himself,) “for as the greatest art is

to conceal art, so the greatest proof of sense is to be able to conceal sense, and not let it evaporate in words, looks, and gestures, which may, it is true, catch the vulgar; but never imposes on the more enlightened; (at this ironical quibble, the face of Charles was again all sunshine — and the wiley duke* continued) — but I was saying that this royal looking bird negatived the Chamberlain's vote. — No, said he, for one who is perfection's self, — for Miss Stewart! to steal our eggs, is 'to take that which makes *us* poor indeed, and naught enriches her.' Here was Will Shakspeare and truth against me; so what could I do, most peerless lady, but make good my retreat?" "Oh nothing," said the Stewart; and much laughter

* Bishop Burnet says, in his History of his Own Times, vol. i. p. 137., speaking of the Duke of Buckingham: — "He was bred about the king; and for many years had a great ascendant over him; but he spoke of him to all persons with that contempt, that he (Buckingham) at last drew a lasting disgrace on himself."

followed Buckingham's harangue ; which was only drowned by the noise of bells, which began ringing to summon to a collation the different parties scattered about the park. White capped cooks (all men of France) were seen running to and fro in every direction ; pages, lacquies, jesters, and musicians, all jostled one another ;—one man appeared particularly to attract the attention of the crowd that was gathered round him ; he was a tall old man, with a very long snuff-coloured garment, made after the Persian fashion, trimmed at the bottom with twelve enormous yellow vandykes ; in the centre of each was one of the signs of the zodiac, painted black — his shoes were of wood, turned up at the ends ; — round his waist he wore a spotted girdle of calf-skin ; and on his breast, in lieu of a star, a large brazen sun ; his beard (one half of which was equally divided into white, and the other black) descended below his girdle ; —

his eye-brows, which were also party-coloured, were so bushy as to form quite a veranda over his eyes, and render them almost invisible ; on his head was an Armenian cap, only made of spotted cat's skin, instead of Astracan fur ; and in the front of it was a stuffed cat's head and ears, with two large green glass eyes, which gave the wearer a very formidable appearance ; in his mouth were two Jews' harps (or, as they were then called, mouth trumps), which he played most dexterously for a dwarf to dance to ;— the dwarf was as curious a specimen of humanity as his master — he had a hump on his back that rose much above his head ; neither was his costume inferior ; having a dress made *all in one* of leopard skin ; so that his hands and feet being tightly covered with it, had precisely the appearance of those of a wild beast ; — in other respects he aped the extreme of the mode ; — a falling collar, not indeed of point, but of highly tanned leather,

with leathern strings to correspond, at the end of which, however, instead of tassels, hung a deer's foot ; — from his throat to his waist was a thick row of silver Spanish buttons, inside of which were little bells, so that whenever he moved, a jingling sound issued from them that was by no means unpleasant ; he wore on his head a wig with large long curls, according to the fashion of the day, save that one side of it was of a jet black, and the other of a bright gold colour ; his face was equally calculated to please all tastes ; one cheek being of deep olive, to suit the sable locks that shaded it, whilst the other (thanks to a no small amalgamation of red and white paint,) displayed as many lilies and roses as the garden of the Houries in the seventh heaven ; his *moustaches*, too, bore the same stamp of impartiality, one being blond, the other brun, and his chin-tuft in the spirit of variety that distinguished his whole person, grey ;

— his staff of office was a long bull-rush, at the end of which was affixed an inflated bladder, with which *ex officio* he avenged every indignity offered to his person or appearance. — The royal party, as they passed to their tent, could not but stop and look at this grotesque pair; the strange antics of the dwarf so diverted the king that he gave him a gold Jacobus, which the other received with the most condescending impertinence, and dexterously attaching a string to it, hung it round his neck like an order, — taking immediately after a leaden medal from his breast, on which was engraved a likeness of himself and his master, perforated at the top so as to admit a piece of hempen string; — he stepped up to the king, and suspended it to his majesty's button, and then retired with the air of an ambassador who had conveyed the present of one sovereign to another.

“ ’Fore George,” said the king, “but

thou art the very prince of fools, and we ourselves should much like to have thee, but that our court is, in truth, already over-stocked with thy kind, and it would be a pity to rob thy master of his only one ; but we will see more of thee anon ; mean while look to it, my merry men, and see that they starve thee not while we dine." So saying, the "mutton-eating king" passed on to his rose-coloured and silver tent, where all that French cooks could do for his table, and French milliners for his beauties, combined to please him. During the repast, the musicians were not idle ; and while the gay monarch, who had to endure his consort on one side, could only pledge la belle Stewart in silence from his jewelled cup, the duke (who had just commenced his plan of governing her for the purpose of better managing the king) entertained her with such follies as best suited both her taste and capacity ; among others, he took special care of her little dog, *Ninon*,

whom he kept in his lap, holding her paws and the knife and fork close together, (as we guide a child's hand that cannot write,) and so, with his assistance, making the dog appear to cut its own food, and convey it to its mouth, without putting its head into the plate—which so amused the fair Stewart and her royal lover, that they could not eat for laughing.—“How nice and cool it is here,” observed the Stewart; “the sun does not come in at all; I wonder why it does not?”

“Because,” returned Buckingham, in answer to the sapient surmise, “he is vain, and likes not to come where brighter suns would eclipse him.”

“Oh, I see,” said the Stewart, tittering, and looking towards that brown and bony piece of endurance, Lady Rochester, who sat within four of them.

“True,” rejoined the duke, “you are a better astronomer than I am, for *it is a luminous* body coming in contact with

an *opaque* one that causeth an eclipse, and the *opaque* one that eclipseth."

"Look at the Duke of York," whispered the Stewart—"how funny he looks, does he not? but how handsome Miss Hamilton looks, does she not?" Of these two questions the duke only thought fit to reply to the latter, by assuring the fair querist, that beauty ceased to exist in *her* presence; for that even Miss Hamilton's otherwise beautiful face, *near hers*, appeared *une figure de la derniere laideur*."

"Oh, you do not think *all* faces lose by being near mine," said the laughing beauty; "for I hear you were very busy, some time ago, writing sonnets to Miss *Blague*."

"Most true," said Buckingham, with great solemnity; "I own, that spite of that chevaux de frize of white eye-lashes, that mutilates all the glances she gives and receives, (the latter, albeit, ever in the minority,) I did at one time

entertain the presumptuous thought of wooing her on my own account ; but *dans le premier pas*, (*i. e.*) trying to indite one of those very sonnets you allude to—I found it impossible to get more than *one* rhyme for a name as unique and odd as its owner ; but having occasion, at this critical juncture, to dispatch a billet to the Chevalier de Gramont, I thought he might extricate me from my dilemma, and so I put at the end of my letter—‘*pray assist me—what must she be ? when*

*I can find no rhyme for Miss Blague,
But that she's a monstrous plague ;*

but instead of helping me, the inhuman chevalier merely tore off this part of my letter, and sent it back to me, with these words written under it : “ *je vous prend au pied de la lettre, vous avez raison ;*”—thus were all my hopes blighted at once ; but instead of impiously repining, and giving way to despair, I instantly

recommenced, for the good of another, my labours ; to which those of Hercules were nothing — and resolved that love should do his worst, and I my best for the exquisite Blague ; and the Marquis de Brisacier, whom I believe,” (said Buckingham, changing his voice to that of the Marquis, whom he mimicked to the life) — “ *have had de honeur to be laugh at more den mille fois par Mam’selle Stewart, la plus belle rieuse du monde.*” *La plus belle rieuse du monde* was still laughing at Buckingham’s account of what he called his *délire* for Miss Blague, when Lord Arlington’s page came to présent her with a golden cup of sack on the part of his master ; — it was then the fashion for a lady to sip wine from a cup, and return it to the cavalier who had sent it, that he might pledge her from the same : — as she raised it to her lips, Buckingham leant forward, and mimicking Lord Arlington, who sat at the other end of the table, told him that Miss Stewart

drank to his health in all sincerity, and was glad of this public opportunity of expressing her obligations to him, as he contributed more to her *amusement* than any man at court. The good natured monarch, alarmed at the emphasis the duke gave to the last word—and at his audacity in taking the chamberlain off to his face in a manner so ridiculously like, that no one could conceal their mirth—instantly called their attention to the medal the dwarf had given him.—“How is this,” said he, taking it from his button, and examining it; “here we are as fairly entrapped into granting a boon as Cydippe was by Acontius;—however, the knave was determined his request should have some weight with us, by its being on lead:—listen to it, my Lords;” (and the king read) “*Whosoever has worn this medal but for a moment is bound, as though he had taken an oath, to grant the first boon the tallest figure inscribed thereon shall ask of him, and that*

too before another sun sets.” “Odds life,” cried the king, when he ceased reading, “but thou art as ingenious a piece of knavery as ever found its way to a court, — and we will hear what thy modesty requires of us. — Killegrew, seek this knave, or rather knaves, and bring them here on the instant: — and, George,” (he added, turning to Buckingham, and lowering his voice,) “canst lend me fifty broad pieces, in case their demands should lie that way?”

“I grieve that I cannot,” said Buckingham, “for to say truth, I have of late left off lining my doublet with gold, conceiving that, as your majesty never did so, it must be bad style.” — Here the duke took a pinch of snuff, as a full stop. — “Out upon thy *empty* compliment, of imitating so poor a precedent,” said the king, laughing. — The repast being at an end, embossed cups of dead silver, in the form of a water-lily, filled with rose-water, were placed before each person, —

and *Ninon's* paws, infinitely to the diversion of her mistress, duly plunged into one of them by Buckingham. — After an hour's absence, Killegrew returned, saying "that he had in vain sought every where for the dwarf and his master, but could find no trace of them, and no one could give him any information respecting them." "'Tis wonderous strange," said the king, "and not a little increaseth our wish to see them; but, no doubt, his diplomatic dwarfship does not brook being bidden, and will choose his own time to expound the strange inscription on his medal." — "I must to London," said the Duke of Bucks, "before the sun sets, and he is now beaming farewell to-day; but if I see any thing of this pair, I'll secure them and bring them with me to Whitehall to-night." — "Do so," said the king, "and tell them they shall have their boon." "But whatever you do, pray try and find the dwarf," said the Stewart. — Buckingham promised, and left the tent.

CHAP. XII.

THE duke walked on till he gained the water-side, asking every one he met, if they had seen the two mountebanks — but no intelligence could he gain concerning them. While he was waiting for his boat, he heard a guitar, accompanied by a very pretty soprano voice, which he took for a woman's, till, turning round, he perceived the musician to be a young boy, about nine or ten years old, of uncommon beauty ; his dress had once been that of a page, but had not only seen better days, but was so fantastically arranged, as to retain nothing of its former calling but the green and gold that composed it ; he wore a velvet cap of the same colours, put on, on one side, so as to display the prettiest head of golden curls that ever was seen. On Bucking-

ham's observing him, he ceased playing—and tripping up to him, accosted him, with “My Lord Duke, the evening is sultry; your Grace's cloak must be heavy for such noble shoulders, and I shall feel honoured in carrying it for you.”

“’Tis plain, by thy civility, that thou dost take me for a duke,” said Buckingham; “but how camest thou to guess me at that mark, Sir Conjuror?”

“If you are not a duke,” said the urchin, “why nature's a cheat, and fortune's a greater; for, to my taste, you are the properest stuff for a duke that ever came under the scrutiny of my vision.”

“Bravely mouthed, and worthy of Whitehall,” cried Buckingham, flinging him one angel for his civility, and another for his flattery; “but tell me, jackanapes, hast seen any thing of a tall, strange looking man, with a marvellously whimsical dress, and a dwarf with him, stuffed into leopard skin?”

“Ay,” quoth the boy, “that strange man took a boat for London an hour and a half ago.”

“But the dwarf,” said the duke ; “I have seen nothing like him.”

“*Nullum simile quod idem est,*” replied the boy.

“Thy Latin,” said Buckingham, “is Greek to me, and to thyself too, I suspect, from the manner thou dost apply it ; but as thy music is better than thy learning, come with me to London, and sing for me while they row, and it may chance thou shalt not want a supper.” So saying, he stepped into the boat, and lying down across the seats, began smoking a segar, whilst the young musician, after a short prelude on his guitar, sang, with the most ludicrous contortions imaginable, the following song :—

“Amor, perchè mi pizzichi ?

Amor, perchè mi stuzzichi ?

Lo sái che senza te non posso reggere

Dunque che ci fara ?

Amor, se mi vuoi bene,
Consola le mie doglie
Tu rendimi la moglie,
Che in male guarira,
Le donne non mi guardano ;
E dicon ch' io son brutto,
Ma in ciò non son colpevole ;
Mio padre fece tutto.
Infatti, ne convengo
La faccia è una graticola
Ho gli occhi di civettola
Il naso d' elefante
In somma, è indubitabile
E ver, son troppo brutto ;
Ma amor aggiusta tutto ;
Amor m' ajutera."

When Buckingham's laughter would allow him to speak, he was profuse in his praises of the voice and humour of the little minstrel, and asked him if he should like to be his page.

" I am much beholden to your Grace," replied the boy, " and should marvelously like to serve so rare a gentleman, did I not already own another master."

" And what name may he claim who commands the services of your page-ship?" enquired the duke.

“ Albeit,” said the stripling, “ his names are as numerous as his garments, and he changes them about as often, and not knowing exactly which of them he identifies himself with at *this* moment, I can venture no solution to that question.”

“ Well, if *thou* too art not a Proteus, what name may have the honour of designating *thee*?” asked Buckingham.

The boy hesitated for a moment, and then blushing like a girl, answered, “ Zingaro.”

“ Zingaro! why, thou little gipsy, if thou art really an Italian, thou speakest English to a miracle — and if, on the other hand, thou art nothing but English, thou singest Italian like a forgery, so look at it which way one will, thou art a cheat ; but I shrewdly suspect, Signor Zingaro, thou hast hit upon that name less to distinguish thee, than to designate the gipsy life thou appearest to lead.”

Zingaro made no other answer, than

by shaking back his pretty golden curls, and striking the chords of his guitar, to which he sang an English ballad with as much pathos as he had previously done his buffo song with spirit and humour. — When he ceased, the duke drew the crimson curtains of the awning, and ordered him to sing on — then turning to the boat-men, cried, “Ply your oars swiftly, ye lazy varlets, for already night is on the waters, and I have much to do ere day dawns.” So saying, he gathered his cloak closely about him, and composed himself to sleep, from which he did not awaken till they arrived at Westminster stairs.

On landing, a shabby-looking porter came up to him, and asked if he might carry his Lordship’s baggage. “Baggage!” said the duke; “methinks drinking has made thee blind, for I *have* none.”

“What call you that?” said the man, pointing to Zingaro.

“No girl,” said Buckingham, not a little pleased at the man’s taking or pretending

to take him for a woman, as he by no means disliked the idea of having it supposed that some enamoured damsel had adopted that disguise for the purpose of being near him—"No girl, merely a young musician, whom I've picked up in this day's adventure."

He had scarcely finished speaking, before the porter seized Zingaro, guitar and all, and slung him across his shoulder like a portmanteau; to which strange proceeding the boy did not make the slightest resistance, and the duke was so amused with its pleasantry, that he allowed the man to follow him, looking back, however, every now and then, to see that he did not escape with the boy. "How comes it," (said he, as the moon fell full on the figure of the porter while they crossed the bridge,) "how comes it, that a strong man like thee, well able to work, should yet bear about thee so many of the outward and visible signs of poverty, without being overburdened with any of its inward and spi-

ritual grace? for thou hast neither humility nor diffidence to stand in thy way.”

“Those two last qualifications,” replied the porter, “have so long been out of fashion at court, that they have now become vulgar even among the vulgar; but as for my being poor, I may well be so, when such fellows as my Lord Rochester, and the rest of the set, have the effrontery to employ me without the principle to pay me.”

“Thou art an impudent varlet,” said the duke; “and if thou makest as free with the goods and chattels of thy employers, as thou dost with their names and characters, I marvel not that they do not pay thee, for thou must pay thyself; — but for my Lord Rochester, he is a worthy gentleman, who would not defraud such as thee; but being at present absent from court, may have forgotten thy demands: certain it is, thou wouldst not dare to traduce him to his face.”

“ Ay, but I have said it to his face,” cried the porter, “ and” — here they arrived at the duke’s house ; and the thread of the porter’s harangue was snapped by the loud ring Buckingham gave at the gate.

“ Here,” said the duke, “ here is a Jacobus for thee, and put down thy burden.”

“ Not so,” replied the porter, rejecting the money, and following the duke across the court, — “ my business ends not here.”

“ Follow me then, for thy effrontery seems an indisputable passport,” said Buckingham, who would have risked an empire for a jest, an adventure, or a laugh — and the duke and the porter ascended the marble stairs together ; the latter still carrying Zingaro on his shoulders, unstared at even by the crowd of menials in waiting — who had long ceased to feel, much less to appear surprised, at any of their enigmatical lord’s proceedings.

The mansion was, in every way, worthy of the owner, who has been described by Lord Orford as possessing “the figure and genius of an Alcibiades, who could equally charm the presbyterian Fairfax, and the dissolute Charles ; who alike ridiculed the witty king and his solemn chancellor ; who plotted the ruin of his country with a cabal of bad ministers, or, equally unprincipled, supported its cause with bad patriots ; that Alcibiades, who turned chemist ; who, devoid of every virtue, was a real bubble, and a visionary miser ; with whom ambition was but a frolic, and with whom the worst designs were for the most foolish ends.” The magnificence of his house seemed less the result of taste than the gratification of whim ; statue crowded on statue, as though one had superseded the other in the good graces of its owner, before its companion had time to be removed ; so that Cupids, Venuses, vestals, and Apollos, jostled each other in a most unorthodox

manner. On each side of every step of the stairs was an alabaster vase, filled with exotics; and at either end of each landing-place marble vestals, who held in their hands censers, from which issued a perfumed flame, that shed a soft, but very brilliant light. The banisters were of bronze; the part to lean on was in the form of twisted branches of palm — whilst the other was composed of lyres, with golden chords, and a sprig of myrtle in green bronze ran through each of them; all the doors were of black oak, richly carved, and beaded with gold, and over each a velvet drapery, ornamented with gold or silver fringe, and of the same colour as the furniture of the room to which it belonged. That of the first ante-room they entered was blue satin, embroidered with silver stars, except the hangings, which were of blue and white velvet, beautifully shaded in imitation of clouds, and studded with stars of cut crystal, that sparkled like a real firma-

ment ; on the ceiling was an allegorical painting of Love, chasing the hours ; — outside the windows were innumerable parterres of mignonette, through which the summer air came wooingly ; making the room redolent with their breath. On a couch, near the door of the inner room, were two pages, half lying, half sitting, both fast asleep at either end. “ How now, sirs ? ” said the duke, shaking their shoulders, and most effectually awakening them ; “ *both* asleep on your posts ! How should you like,” he added, pointing to Zingaro, who had just been placed on *terra firma* by the porter, — “ how should ye like to be displaced by yonder urchin ! who is worth ten such sleepy-headed knaves as you ? ”

They stared for a moment at their master’s companions, and the next, threw open the doors to let him pass, but would have prevented the entry of the other two, had not the porter pushed them back, and, shutting the door in

their faces, forced his way after the duke, leaving Zingaro with them — no doubt, as a hostage for his return.— The room they were now in, was spacious beyond measure, and as lofty as it was large; the dark and highly carved oak of the wainscot was so intermixed with ivory and gold, as to relieve, in a great measure, the sombre hue of the wood; a gallery went round the apartment, containing a splendid collection of pictures, all the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the best masters; it was supported by Corinthian pillars, of green marble; between each pillar was a statue that served as a lamp-bearer: — Mercuries, whose caduceuses were flame — Cupids and Cephaluses, whose arrows were fire — Apollos and Orpheuses, whose lyres emitted light for music,—and Circes, whose cups contained the same destructive element. The hangings were crimson and gold, upheld by gilded eagles; in the centre of the room was a large study-table of ivory, inlaid

with gold, at which sat a young man writing; whose form and face were perfect symmetry; his beautiful chesnut hair fell in large natural curls below his shoulders, according to the fashion of the times; his dress was of dark coloured velvet. The large rosettes of his red-heeled shoes were covered with dust, and his whole attire bore the appearance of recent travelling; at his feet lay a large Siberian wolf-dog in a profound slumber, and at the back of his chair hung a cloak and a casket; whilst on the table beside him was his hat and sword, which also bore the dusty relics of a recent journey. The entrance of Buckingham and the porter seemed unheeded by him, till his attention was roused by the low growling of his dog, who had half risen from his recumbent posture, and advanced one paw on the defensive, whilst the other remained tucked lazily under him. On perceiving the Duke, the young man rose to meet him, his dog following

slowly, with his head down, and his tail wagging leisurely : whilst his master was engaged with the Duke, he thought fit to scrutinize the porter narrowly, resenting any friendly overtures on the part of the latter, with a suppressed growl. — Buckingham conversed for a few minutes apart with the handsome stranger, and then looking towards the undaunted porter, took a lamp from the table, and conducted his guest to the upper end of the room, and throwing open a door which led into a dressing-room, said — “ Here you will find all you want, and when I have dismissed yonder varlet, I’ll be with you anon.” So saying, he closed the door, and returning to the porter, asked him “ what his business might be, since he had intruded so far, to transact it.”

“ Whatever my business may be,” replied he, with even more effrontery than he had yet assumed, “ we can better discuss it at supper, over a *filet* of peacocks’ brains, and a flask of your Grace’s best

Chambertin, for there's truth in wine ; but, I fear, very little without it."

"Take heed, knave," cried the Duke, "thy impudence is outstripping thy discretion ; but if thou hast aught to ask, be brief — for my time is full till mid-night."

"And is it so, the Duke of Bucks would escape asking his old friends to supper ?" said the porter, folding his arms, and looking with his head on one side, at the Duke ; "if it is, then, in good sooth, is George Villiers changed." At this speech, which Buckingham conceived the extremity of the fellow's ill-timed pleasantry already carried too far, — his hand was on a little silver bell, which, taking from the table, he was about to ring for some one to conduct the porter out, who did not appear inclined to take leave of his own accord, — when the latter sprang forward, and placing one hand on the Duke's arm, with the other (as though it had been the wand of a magician) tore from his face his beard,

which was affixed to a mask of coarse muslin, and from his person the rags which enveloped it, and discovered to the eyes of the astonished Duke, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, in full dress, even to his George and Garter.

“What, Rochester! — why this prank exceeds all thine others; and though I have not seen thee these three months, I could never have dreamt, that saucy knave of a porter, who was so eloquent on thy merits, had such good reason to be acquainted with them, — but did I not defend thee bravely against his accusations?”

“Ay, right well,” said Lord Rochester, laughing, “but I should be the more beholden to thee, were it not that I have somewhere heard, that there is a sort of *esprit de corps* among rogues and rascals, (in which class the parsons and citizens, God forgive them, rank us,) which makes them always break a lance in defence of one another; conceiving, that

an impertinence offered to one, is an indirect affront to the worthy community at large ; and therefore it behoves them to make common cause of it under all such attacks.”

“ At that rate,” said Buckingham, “ thou must ever be in arrears to the tribe, John.”

“ Yes, for I have to mortgage so much valour on thy account ; — but, tush, the night wears apace, and thou hast not yet thanked me for the amusement my dwarf and I afforded thee at Greenwich, — but above all, how did old Rowly relish the jest ? and what thought he of the medal my ambassador did him the honour to present to him ?”

“ What ! thou the mountebank too ? a rare genius truly ; — why thou *hast not* over shot thy mark ; for the last thing Charley bid me do, was to seek thee and thy dwarf (little dreaming it *was thee*,) — and tell thee thy boon was granted, — but if he should turn restive

at the discovery, I pity thee, for the whole court is in possession of the adventure, and wild to know how it will end ; — God send, not in thy defeat, Jack."

"Thinkest thou that fortune is not to be managed as well as any other jade?" said Rochester, "but leave that to me ; — give me thy assistance, and spare thy fears, for an ounce of help is better than a pound of pity, — and the first help thou canst give me is to order supper as quickly as may be, for I am as hungry as one of Richmond's hounds."

"We will have it on the instant," (said the Duke, ringing the before mentioned silver bell) — "but where didst thou get that choice piece of mal-construction the dwarf? and where hast thou left him?"

"Nay," (cried Rochester,) "not so ill formed either ; for if thou wilt find me a prettier page in the three kingdoms, or a cleverer one than my little Eden

Green, who sang to thee from Greenwich to London, and who is now in yonder ante-room, sell my earldom for a groat, and Wilmot for half the money."

"What! thy page a Proteus too? By my faith he is worthy of his master, for never was greater change from darkness to light, than from the spotted dwarf to the golden haired minstrel—but how—" here one of the sleeping pages appeared to answer the bell.— "Oh, see that we've supper directly," said Buckingham; "covers for three, and let it be in the chamber of the forty saints." The page stared at seeing Rochester, (not knowing how on earth he had got in,) but at length coming to his recollection, bowed, and withdrew.

"Why in the chamber of the forty saints?" said Rochester, laughing as he repeated Buckingham's order, "is it, gentle Bucks, by way of performing a sort of quarantine against the d—l in case he should drop in to make a *parti*

quarré whilst I am relating my adventures, — which I intend to regale you with at supper?”

“Ha! ha! ha! no bad idea,” laughed the Duke, “though it was not mine, — as my only reason for supping in that room is, that it has a terrace which looks into the street, at the back of the house, that is the shortest way to Whitehall, and will save our going through the court — which may be as well avoided, considering I have another guest, who must have a private audience with old Rowly as well as thee. — Young Ossory, whom you saw here anon; and who by the way is just returned from France with a set of brilliants for my *élève* Frances Stewart, who could not rest till she had a set the *facsimile* of Madame de la Vallière’s, of which the Viscomtesse d’Angelieu had foolishly said so much in her letters,—but this is a secret,” said Buckingham, (one however which he had pretty well disseminated,) — “but

the dwarf's hump," he added, "I was going to ask you how you managed that?" —

"*Utile dulci*," said Rochester, "is one of my maxims; and that hump is an itinerant receptacle for our wardrobes; contains moreover pens, ink, and paper, and even money when we have it, besides divers other implements meet for travelling gentlemen of our calling." —

"Bravo!" cried Buckingham, "but I must see my friend Zingaro."

"Who mean you?" asked Rochester.

"Why your thousand and one bodied page, for so it was he christened himself coming up the river."

"Ah! say you so? then, 'fore George, he does justice to the pains I have taken with his wits to sharpen them; for the invention was purely his own, though appropriate enough to have been mine. — I suppose you know I bought him from a gang of those cat-fed knaves the gipsies, before he had well numbered

three summers? — but I must seek the urchin, for I have two missions to send him on while we sup; — so saying, he walked to the door of the ante-room and called him. When he appeared, Buckingham went up to him, and patting his head, said, —

“ So master Eden Green, now that I know by what name to invite thee, I shall be happy to see thee to supper; when thou hast done thy master’s bidding — which albeit none can do better; even to finding a good name for thyself, — though thou wert not conjuror enough to make one for *him*. ”

Master Eden bowed, and smiled his thanks to the Duke for his invitation and his compliment, but assumed a becoming degree of gravity at the latter part of it that related to his lord; and turning to him begged to know his commands.

“ Here, ” said Rochester, taking a parcel of letters and papers from his

bosom — “take this (putting a letter into his hand,) “to Mrs. Barry at the theatre, and tell her I’ll call myself to-morrow — but that the king has changed his mind about “Tom Essence.”—Then go to José Corvò, the Jew perfumer, and tell him to send me four bottles of the same *Greek smoke*, as he calls it, that he sent me last week ; — and eight dozen more of those pastille hearts, (the only ones which really consume,) but *mind*, he is to send them to *Tower Street*, — not on any account to the *Mall* ; — then go *thou* on to *Tower Street*, as if thy heels had wings, (as I sometimes verily think they have,) and bring the dresses we wore to-day at Greenwich, (or rather the fellows to them,) and put into thy hump the diary I have kept since I’ve turned astrologer, — thou’lt find it tied round with that blue girdle of Mrs. Middleton’s in the drawer where I keep the ready-made horoscopes ; — and now, sirrah, off with thee,” said Rochester,

illustrating his command with a slap on the shoulder, — “but mind,” he added, “that thou art back before we have time to despatch the first flask of his Grace’s Rhenish.”

Master Eden was out of sight in a moment ; and as he vanished, his Grace’s *maitre-d’hotel* appeared to announce supper. — “Ah, *benè*,” cried Rochester, as he linked his arm through the Duke’s, who led the way to the upper end of the room — and opening the door of the apartment in which he had left Lord Ossory. — “Here now,” said he, addressing the latter, while he pointed to his companion — “who would have thought that that ambulating rag-fair you saw with me anon, should have concealed so goodly a part of the peerage?” The young earl laughed much as he shook hands with Rochester ; and listened to the account of his day’s adventure. — “Come, come,” interrupted the Duke, “Monsieur Challon likes not to have his

most exquisite efforts of culinary genius spoiled, — as I doubt not they will be, if we tarry much longer, — besides we have much to do, and brief time to do it in ; to listen to thy three months' adventures alone, John, would take one the best part of a life, much less the remnant of a night ; to say nothing of thy peace, which is yet to be made at Whitehall, and which may take more time and trouble than we think for ; — so with your leave we'll to supper, as this youth's toilette is now complete," (glancing at the court-suit for which Lord Ossory had exchanged his travelling dress,) and saying this, he opened another door, through which they all passed — Lord Ossory calling "Leo, Leo, Leo," to his dog, who, with the characteristic feeling of his species, appeared as anxious to court attention from Rochester in his splendid attire, as he had been tenacious of receiving it from him in his tattered habiliments. — When

they had arrived at the end of the long and dimly-lit corridor which they were in, they descended a flight of narrow stone steps; and arriving at another, as spacious and brilliantly illuminated, (for it was in fact an armoury,) as the first had been narrow and obscure, they reached the room of the "forty saints."

CHAP. XIII.

THE room in which Buckingham entertained his guests took its name from having twenty painted windows on either side, that commenced about five feet from the ground, and reached to the ceiling; on each window, in colours exquisitely blent, was illustrated the leading event in the life of some particular saint. The room itself was built like a cathedral, save that its Doric columns and fretted arches were of oak instead of stone; banners that had been won in the Holy Land waved gloomily from the latter; whilst the former were decorated with escutcheons, spears, greaves, gauntlets, and other disjointed pieces of armour; also the spoils of the crusades. Between each pillar stood a wooden knight, armed *cap-a-pee*, or shell clad

pilgrim, whose pious prototypes had long mingled with the classic dust of ages ; — indeed, the whole room seemed one last emporium of the relics of the church militant ; and strangely incongruous did the large oaken refectory table, spread in its centre, and groaning under the weight of gold plate, costly viands, and sparkling wines appear ; it might have seemed like a banquet spread for the dead, had not the boisterous mirth and ribaldry of two of the banqueters forbade the idea. The attendants were all in waiting, but none of them within hearing ; for the duke liked no one to forestall him in the publishing of his own or his friends' secrets, and, therefore, never trusted to the ear of a domestic, what his tongue might betray. Monsieur Challon, his grace's *artiste de cuisine*, was the very prince of caterers ; the *ne plus ultra* of cooks ; his *compots de bécassine* were food for the gods ! his *rissoles* unrivalled ; his *entremets-au-ris de veau*, superb ; his

soupe à la reine perfectly regal. Then he understood *le système omeletoire, au dernier point de sa beauté ; omelette soufflée, omelette baveuse, omelette aux fines herbes, omelette à la Montmorency, omelette de printemps, omelette au sang de lièvre, omelette bourgeoise, omelette de ménage, omelette du diable à quatre ;* each owned his power ; and each, in its turn, excelled the other. Then his *filets* of peacocks' brains could not be imitated by any *artiste* in Europe ; and could barely have been equalled in ancient Rome ; but his *chef-d'œuvre* was a devil of his own invention, which consisted of quails, stewed in champaigne, and then grilled with all the spices of the East, and which he christened, by way of a delicate compliment to his master, "*Diable piquant à la Villiers,*" (Buckingham being too hard a name for a French tongue to get out in a hurry.) Monsieur Challon was, indeed, the only person from whom people might have endured

“ *toujours perdrix;*” but from *him*, *kings* as well as cardinals might have borne them for ever, even had they been *à la reine*; but his chief merit consisted, as he thought, (and his master too) in his having left, as he phrased it, the *court* of *Louis Quatorze*, whose once far-famed *petits soupers* had never recovered the state of mediocrity his departure had plunged them into; — but then, much as he loved his *chère patrie*, and revered *le grand monarque*, the latter had once dared to dispute with him the propriety of substituting one soup for another, and this was an indignity his culinary sense of honour could not brook! Such was Monsieur Challon’s account of the matter; but the truth was, when the duke was in France, previous to the Restoration, he liked his fare at the French court so well, that he determined to get personally acquainted with the source from whence it came, and having achieved this mighty point, by dint of

bribery, and a promise of (the then) enormous salary of 100*l.* a-year; but still more by flattery, and imploring him to come and improve *l'état barbare* of English cookery, Monsieur Challon was persuaded to leave *la belle France*, and embarked for England, fully convinced, in his own mind, that Cromwell, during his protectorship, never had half so much to do and undo as he should have, and equally assured, that the victories of *Turenne* and *Condé* were nothing to those he should gain over the “*au naturel*” Goth and Vandalism of English kitchens. Be this as it might, he had no cause to repent his trip; for being just as fond of accumulating bright guineas as any lady at court, he often kindly lent his services to the Chevalier de Gramont, Killegrew, Lord Ranelagh, and others; so that in the very first year of his emigration, he nearly quadrupled the salary allowed him by his nominal master.

“ Now then,” said Buckingham, filling a golden cup full of wine, when Monsieur Challon’s supper had been fully praised and half eaten, “ here’s to thy exploits, Rochester, and the sooner we hear them the better.”

“ I need not acquaint either of you,” began the Earl, “ with my *gaucherie*, in showing old Rowly a lampoon on himself, instead of one I had made on Richmond, and being accordingly banished from court some three months ago ; but I need acquaint you where I went, for doubtless you all thought it was to the country, to meditate on the mutability of human affairs, and repent at leisure of my folly ; — quite the contrary,—if not a better subject, I at least became a better citizen than ever ; a change, miraculous as it may seem, that was accomplished by the simple process of my hiring three commodious apartments up three pair of stairs in Tower-street ; *

* See Burnet’s *Life of Rochester*, ed. 1774, p. 14.

and there passing for a German doctor, I caused hand-bills to be printed and distributed, which contained endless eulogiums on my own skill. The humbug was sufficiently great to satisfy even an English public ; and I soon had patients flocking to me from all parts of the town, whom I quacked till, if they were not cured, they thought they ought to be so, which, in nine cases out of ten, is the same thing as being so ; but the people whom I gained most renown amongst, were the citizens' wives, who came to me to be cured of nerves, the spleen, and other modifications of ill temper, under polite names. I soon made them so well pleased with themselves, and consequently with me, that they went home ringing my praises, and so improved in humour, that the husbands came with gold, and gratitude, and gave me pressing invitations to their houses, to which they would take no refusal, had I been inclined to make any, which I was not.

Once domesticated with these worthy folks, I made out that I enjoyed as great a reputation at court, as I did in the city, (and so I did, but of a somewhat different kind, it is true,) and if I delighted the wives, by detracting from the merits of the court beauties, as compared to theirs, so I equally charmed the husbands, by railing at the profligacy of the men; (Forgive me, gentle Bucks, if I did not spare thee;) but on *myself*, I was particularly severe, even robbing you, Sedley, Killegrew, Berkeley, and Ranelagh, of a few of your achievements to emblazon my own quarterings; and, indeed, if it were not that I never set one sou's more value on my character than its worth, I should have more than once betrayed myself, by resenting the opprobrious vocabulary these varlets had recourse to whenever my name was mentioned. However, I soon grew tired of conquests so easily acquired, and fame, so more than easily retained; moreover,

I found that at the end of six weeks, I owed Blondel, the jeweller, for pearls, brilliants, rings, chains, and trinkets, (which I gave to the citizenesses, in exchange for their good opinion of me,) 2000*l*.

“ Two thousand pounds !” echoed Buckingham.

“ Even so,” said Rochester, “ but if thou find it difficult to swallow, thou hadst better liquidate the debt with another cup of Rhenish ; though, in truth, the liberality of the husbands enabled me to defray more than half the debt I had incurred for their wives ; but, as I before said, I grew tired of all this, and giving out that pressing business called me instantly to Germany, I took lodgings in another house in Tower-street, and disguised myself as an Italian mountebank, and practised astrology to the wonder and admiration of every one. It was then, indeed, that my fame in good earnest reached the court ; first came all the Abi-

gails, whom I astounded with the detail of circumstances, the knowledge of which I had long been in possession of in my own proper person ; and such was the incredible account they gave of my magical power of foretelling all that was to come, and guaranteeing its fulfilment by the truth with which I had related to them the events of the past, that next came their mistresses ; and here my task was easier still. Nothing relating to themselves, and those about them, but what I was as well acquainted with as they were ; and a glorious opportunity had I of paying off my old scores ; as for those who had offended me, no good service did I do them with their liege ladies. Little Jermyn, in particular, I painted in none of the brightest colours, whereas, after describing Jabot to the life, and accusing him of every virtue under the sun, I sent that proud little blue-eyed Jennings away, almost broken hearted, by telling her that *he* was the

only one of her lovers that really loved her, but promised, by way of consolation, to show her, on that day week, all her suitors within a magic mirror, and resort to an infallible spell, for discovering which was the most sincere. I managed this part of the business easily enough, by getting full length transparent likenesses of all the people about court painted, (both men and women,) and then shifting them, as occasion required, in and out of the frame of a large looking-glass; so that when a light was placed behind them, they had the most perfect, yet shadowy appearance imaginable, whilst to give a greater air of magic to the machinery, I got from José Corvo, the queen's Jew perfumer, some essence, which, when a few drops of it were dropt on fire, filled the room with volumes of blue, and highly perfumed smoke; then came the spell for putting lover's truth to the test; my friend Corvo had also furnished me with

an adequate number of pastille hearts, made of mock amulet, black enough, it is true, to have been the hearts of the imps of the inquisition ; some of these hearts were left quite dry, so that when put into a censer of fire, they lit instantly, but when lit, consumed slowly, and remained on fire a long time. These were intended to represent constant hearts, (it may be like thine, Ossory) that would burn, and burn for ever. Others I had perforated in all directions, (like thine and mine, Buckingham,) which, from being so perforated, would ignite in a moment, but the flame was almost as quickly extinguished as it had been kindled ; — the third and last class I had steeped in a preparation of ambergris, (that the sagacious Corvo had provided me with,) which caused a light brilliant flame to play continually on their surface, or rather a series of them, for they evaporated soon ; but the ambergris effectually prevented the fire from penetrating, and

consequently, the heart from consuming. All things being thus prepared, the expectant nymphs arrived — and, one at a time, they entered to consult me on their destinies — and an awful-looking personage I was, gorgeously apparelled in my magician's robes, which were very long, of white velvet, with a black tunic ; round my waist, a girdle of twisted silver snakes ; on my head was a veil of silver tissue, that descended as far as my eyes, and was bound round the forehead with a wreath of deadly night-shade ; a milk-white beard flowed to my waist ; my wand was a long crystal prism, which, when the sun was upon it, looked like a meteor ; one foot rested on a globe ; by my side stood Eden Green, with a proper degree of deformity saddled on him ; the canopy of my throne was upheld by the Fates, whose eyes I had so constructed, that on touching a spring, they should move, and even weep, which was contrived by Eden Green's putting water

in their sockets. The yarn that Lachesis was spinning had in it some threads of gold, some of silver, some of a bright rose-colour ; some chequered with gold, silver, rose and black ; but a greater number that were black altogether, whilst the glittering weapon of Atropos looked frightfully keen, and eager to destroy her sister's work ; on each arm of my throne sat, in sleepy state, an enormous Denmark owl. After having duly astounded my votaries as to the past, I proceeded to enlighten them as to the future ; and before the eyes of the enquiring damsel, (raising a sufficient quantity of smoke,) I paraded the effigy of every cavalier that had ever said a civil thing to her, dropping a heart into the censer before each, as he past, and telling the lady before hand, that whatever form a heart should burn the longest at, *that* was the cavalier who loved her best ; you may be sure I always took care that one of the *semper eadem* hearts

should consume before the hero I pleased or she pleased, just as it might happen ; therefore, you cannot wonder that I soon had on my list the names of Brooks, Stewart, Hamilton, Roberts, Middleton, Castlemain, Chesterfield, Temple, Jennings, Blague, Price, Warmestré, Hyde, Denham, Wetenhall, Southesk, besides a thousand others, even to that frightful Portuguese countess of Panétra ; to whom, however, I had the charity to pourtray Jaurauvédez, even telling her the initials of his hundred and fifty names, Pedro Francisco, Correro de Silva, &c. &c. &c., and moreover, that a wicked man (meaning thee, Bucks,) had actually nick-named him out of the kingdom — so much for poor “ *Peter of the Wood.*”

“ Here’s to him,” said Buckingham, laughing, and filling another cup of wine. “ You must have had a rare merry time of it,” continued the duke, “ but I

wonder you bore the confinement so patiently?"

"Confinement," echoed Rochester, "why, not a day past but I was at Spring-gardens, or the theatre, or the Mall; and many a time my link has had the honour of lighting your grace's chair; and though I always conduced in some manner, either to your comfort or amusement, (witness to-day at Greenwich,) yet, because my clothes were not of the finest, none of you would notice me; but thou, George, may'st do me good service yet, if thou wilt. The day after to-morrow I shall have more importations from Whitehall than I can possibly attend to. Now I have initiated thee into all the mysteries of my art, all that is necessary to make thee as good a conjurer as myself, is to put on one of my dresses — wilt thou? and come for one day only, and help me to make destinies for these nymphs?"

"Will I?" cried Buckingham, rubbing

his hands with delight ; “ ay, for twenty days, if it is thy wish ; but art thou sure, John, my nerves can stand the horrors of thy den ? ”

“ The horrors,” said Rochester, “ are all concentrated in my own person, for my den, albeit unlike a den, is worthy of the court of Paphos.”

“ Pray then,” said Lord Ossory, “ let me go as the duke’s coadjutor ? ”

“ Ay, truly, provided you remain in ambush, and come not forward to betray or be betrayed,” said Rochester ; “ but, by the way, we have not yet asked you concerning the French beauties ; — is La Vallière such a divinity ? and Montespan such a houri as they would lead us to believe ? ”

“ The duchess,” replied the young earl, “ has as much mere mortal loveliness as a woman well can have, and the marchioness is a splendid creature, that might, at any time, be mistaken for Juno, yet is there wanting in them both that

soul which sheds a halo round beauty, and creates a charm even where no other exists; they want, too, those eyes which speak, and whose language is light."

"In fact, Sir Critic," interrupted Buckingham, "they want the eyes of the Lady Cordelia Trevillion."

"I sought not for eyes like those of the lady you mention," said Lord Ossory, with a look meant to be that of pride; but his flushed cheek and downcast eye belied his lip of scorn.

"Woo!" said the duke, "I cry you mercy, for so unwarrantable a conjecture, though methinks my pardon should be granted, since the very mention of it has made you look two inches taller; indeed, now that I find *that* lady's eyes and your thoughts are strangers to one another, my conscience begins to smite me for having grudged Sedley every look they cast on him."

"Why, were they so numerous?" asked the young earl, with a forced

smile, that looked like pain in a mask of pleasure, too transparent to conceal one of her features.

“*I did not count them,*” replied the duke, “(though it would have been a pretty pastime enough, had I thought of it,) and Sedley might have found it beyond his arithmetical skill.” Lord Os-sory groaned, and Buckingham, satisfied that he had tormented him enough for one night, turned to his other guest — saying — “but à propos of eyes, Rochester, two such brilliants as have arrived since you have been away, stars might not shine, not shine beside them.”

“Tell me, by what name I am to adore their owner?” said Rochester.

“Berry,” replied the duke; “she is the wife of as strange a piece of mortality as nature in her wildest freak ever produced; a Sir Ambrose Templeton.”

“Then, how came he by such a gem?” enquired the earl. “Why the fates helped him to her; for know that thou

art a fool to him in astrology. She was the daughter of a peasant, whom in her infancy he had adopted; but reading in the stars that he was one day to espouse her, he spirited her away, (as the story goes,) but by some lucky fatality, which always attends heroes and heroines, she got under the protection of the baronet's brother; who, when she grew up, (his wife having civilly died out of the way) was for marrying her; all was settled, when, lo! just as the ceremony was going to take place, the redoubtable Sir Ambrose made his appearance, and in a fit of laudable caprice claimed the fair bride as his own! all was anarchy and confusion, but the utmost his skill could achieve, was cheating his brother out of a wife without getting her for himself; for as legends tell, he presented a ring to the inflexible fair one, who most ungraciously flung it into a river, saying, that when it was found, she would marry him, and not till then. In due time she

married Sir John Berry — who in undue time died ; when, again meeting with her magician-like lover, Sir Ambrose, before she had doffed her weeds for her husband, (whose name she is obliged to retain,) it so chanced that they dined together — and being by him helped to a trout, what was her consternation on opening the fish at discovering the ring ! that very ring which she had consigned to the bright waters of a running river, which, however, having run counter to her wishes, she had no alternative but to marry the old astrologer, and here ends my tale.”

“ ’Tis a strange one,” said Rochester ; “ but could we not manage to get the old gentleman to Tower Street, and between us both manufacture for him a destiny, the very anticipation of which would cause him to fulfil it ; — and so give some of the young fellows about court (Ossory for instance) a chance of the reversion of his beautiful wife.”

“No bad plan,” said Buckingham, laughing; “and I think I could manage it.” —

Here they were interrupted by a knocking at the door; and the duke having bid the person without enter — Eden Green appeared in a gay suit of blue and silver, a black velvet hat with three heron’s plumes, — his guitar slung across his breast, — a sealed packet in one hand, and a basket, containing the apparel for which he had been dispatched, in the other; depositing it on the ground, he presented the packet to his master. — When Rochester had broken the seal, and was examining the contents, Buckingham pointed to a cover, and bid the page be seated.

“Your grace does me too much honour,” replied the boy, “but I have already supped.” — “Even so,” said the duke, “thou wilt not refuse to drink our healths, Master Eden—but where is the Burgundy? I do not see it.”

“ This looks like it, my lord,” said Eden Green, reaching a flask from the other end of the table.

“ *Nullum simile quod idem est,*” said the duke laughing, as he filled out a cup of wine, and gave it to the page, “ at least so thy wisdom told me this morning, — and thou hast proved it, for thou art one and the same with the dwarf and Signor Zingaro, and yet art by no means like either, — but it is strange withal thou should’st like to live like a vagabond.”

“ *Exemplo plus quam ratione vivimus,*” shrugged Master Eden, with an arch look at the duke and his master of mingled impertinence and mock humility. —

“ Pray, Master Malapert,” said the duke, “ didst thou get thy Latin with thy effrontery, from nature ? or does thy master give thee his cast-off classics, with his cast-off clothes ?”

“ So, please your grace,” said the

urchin, with a face of most unmeaning meaning, “ I came honestly by it, having spent a portion of time (my sole inheritance) to purchase it.”

“ ’Tis pity then thou art so lavish of it, if thou bought it at so dear a rate,” said the duke. —

“ ’Fore George,” cried Rochester, bursting into a laugh, and holding out a letter he had just finished reading, — “ if here is not an epistle from the husband of your beauty ; in fact, from the most worthy and most wonderful Sir Ambrose Templeton, addressed to ‘ *The most worthy the Signor Pietro di Manfredati,*’ my astrological title, but hear what he says : —

“ Whitehall, Monday.

“ Respected Sir,

“ Though almost a stranger in this city, yet sufficiently long hath been my sojourn for your fame to have reached my ears ; a fame as high, (and doubtless

as just,) as the heavens from whence it takes its source. — As free or radiant caloric, (called in the vulgar tongue heat of temperature,) comprehends all heat which is perceptible to the senses, and affects the thermometer, so the glorious science of astrology comprehends all the events incident to humanity, and reveals to mortal eyes those features of their destinies which are shrouded in the dark veil of futurity ! — I wish, respected sir, to consult you on the science in general, and on matters touching my own individual horoscope in particular ;—furthermore I shall not now encroach on your valuable time, beyond a request to know what day and what hour it will be most pleasurable to you to see me ; if it interfere not with your more important avocations, I would, if possible, evitate a distant epoch for the interview ; for as a lighted taper placed in water causes the oxygen to be destroyed, or rather decomposed by its combustion, till it

dilates the air, and produces a certain quantum of carbonic acid, —kindled thus the desire in me to commune with one who has raised the veil of futurity higher than any other has ever yet done, has dilated my mind with an enthusiasm, which has produced a degree of impatience to behold the Signor Pietro di Manfredati, that can neither be concealed or expressed

By his very devoted,
and very humble servant to command,
AMBROSE TEMPLETON.”

Long and loud was the laughter the perusal of this epistle occasioned to all present. — “*Quoi faire?*” said Rochester, “shall I profess equal impatience to behold my brother astrologer, and pretend *his* fame has reached me, or at once put on the great man, and plead lack of time as an excuse for not seeing him till the end of the week?”

“Oh, the latter by all means,” said Buckingham.

“Then to put him out of suspense about the honour of an audience with me, I’ll e’en favour him with my written pleasure on the subject ; so now for the ‘appliances and means to boot,’ Master Eden,” said Rochester ; and accordingly Master Eden turned to the basket he had brought, and taking up his leopard-skin garment, touched a spring, which caused the hump to open, and discover a plentiful supply of writing materials, from which his master selected a thin and very yellow looking sheet of parchment, on which he wrote as follows : —

“Through my interpreter and writer, Ginseppe Andare, I, Pierro di Manfredi, professor of the occult sciences, send greeting to Ambrose Templeton, by men called “Sir Ambrose,” and from the number of previous applicants can hold no parley with the said Ambrose, or

“Sir Ambrose,” before the day antecedent to the next sabbath, when (God willing, for *astra regunt homines, sed regit astra Deus*,) I shall expound to him all such mysteries as he may wish to master. — Good speed the while —

PIETRO DI MANFREDATI.”

Given under my hand and
seal, this Twelfth day of
May, anno Domini, 1666,
Tower Street, London.

To this oracular autograph was affixed a large square seal in green wax, on which was inscribed some Egyptian hieroglyphics, that looked a great deal, but might have meant nothing.

“We can leave this precious communication,” said Rochester, laughing as he folded it up, “at Whitehall Place to-night as we pass; Eden Green shall give it to the porter, in his leopard-skin dress. — The knight of course will be

minute in his inquiries as to who brought it ; when the porter no doubt will affirm, that the bearer was an imp, from the other side of the Styx."

" A likely appearance enough for him to have," said the duke, " considering from whom he comes, *aut Rochester es aut Diabolus* ; at all events thou wilt play the d—l to night, if not at Whitehall, before the sand runs out another hour ; so to thy toilette, and whilst thou art getting under that outlandish garb, Master Eden will sing us a song."

" Do," said Rochester, turning to the boy, " and let it be that one the Lady Dorothy Sidney's page taught thee when we were at Penshurst." — Master Eden cast down his eyes, looked sentimental, played a light prelude on his guitar, and sang the following song : —

The moon is up in night, lady,

My bark rides on the sea,

The winds blow fair and light, lady,

To waft me far from thee.

I would that I could take, lady,
The heart that once was mine;
Yet no — that heart may break, lady,
But it will still be thine.

Tho' thou art like a star, lady,
That sparkles from above;
Too bright, too high, too far, lady,
To heed such lowly love.

Yet thou hast lit my path, lady,
And still my guide shall be;
Tho' now away in wrath, lady,
Thy light is turned from me.

Thou bidst me cease my sighs, lady,
I hush'd them from thine ear;
But my less docile eyes, lady,
Still told thee thou wert dear.

Thou bidst me wake my lyre, lady,
To other themes save thee;
I tried — and found each wire, lady,
But knew love's symphony!

Then silent be my lute, lady,
My heart shall be the same;
Their chords must all be mute, lady,
Or vibrate to thy name.

But hence I'll haste away, lady,
Our parting hour be now;
Why cloud-like should I stay, lady,
To darken that fair brow?

Farewell ! and when yon light, lady,
Is sailing o'er thy bower,
Some distant summer night, lady,
Remember thou this hour.

And when o'er yon blue wave, lady,
Cold wintry winds shall breathe,
Remember him whose grave, lady,
Perchance will be beneath.

“ Bravo ! bravo ! bravo ! ” echoed the three peers. “ Bravo,” repeated the duke, “ sung *con amore* ;” why, thou dost not look as if ten summers had rolled over thee, but thy master says thou art fifteen, yet might one shut their eyes and think thee twenty.” — When Rochester was equipped, his page was not long trans-migrating into the deformed dwarf ; and even those who had marked the progress of their toilettes, could with difficulty believe them to be the same persons they had seen a few minutes before, so complete was the disguise, — each having enveloped themselves in a large Spanish cloak that entirely concealed their dress.

Buckingham removed a shield and battle-axe that hung against one of the pillars, and took down a large and curiously wrought brass key that had been suspended underneath.

“This,” said he, “is the key of the gate at the end of the terrace, and now, my lords, proceed we to the charge,” opening, as he spoke, an invisible door between one of the windows; — “but,” turning round, he said to Lord Ossory’s dog, who with true canine politeness had retreated back a few steps to let the rest of the company proceed, wagging his tail courteously to them as they passed, “Leo, you are not to come with us, but, poor fellow, you are not to go without your supper either;” saying which, he patted the chair he had previously occupied at table, for the dog to jump into, which he did instantly; and the duke, placing a fowl on a golden plate before him, and a large tankard of water beside him, left him in full pos-

session of the remains of the banquet, saying, as he closed the door after himself and his friends, "Mind, sir, not a word of any thing that you have seen or heard to-night, — Do you hear, Mr. Bow-wow," he added (seeing the dog was intent on his supper); upon which Leo (first placing one paw on the chicken by way of protection,) looked towards the duke, as if to promise assent. — The trio soon gained the iron gate at the end of the terrace, upon opening which, they found themselves in the street, within five minutes walk of the palace.

CHAP. XIV.

“Now,” said the duke, when they had arrived at Whitehall, “Ossory had better come with me as far as the ante-room, till I tell the king of his arrival; but as for you, Rochester, you must manage your own business as you can; for if old Rowly suspects that I have had any hand in pawning such a wolf in sheep’s clothing on him, there will be the d—l to pay; and where the funds are to come from for the said purpose, I know not, as we are all too much in his debt at present, and I’m sure the privy purse cannot supply them, — salvation in that quarter being already mortgaged twelve deep, so look to it, John, e’en as thou wilt.”

“Thanks, most trusty and well beloved counsellor,” said the earl, “but go thou and procure me the audience,

and never tax thy poor brains with conjectures as to the result ;” saying which, he began to sing in no very soprano voice, one of his own lampoons.

“ Here is a health to Kate,
Our sovereign’s mate,
Of the royal house of Lisbon ;
But the d—l take Hyde,
And the bishop beside,
That made her bone of his bone.”

“ For Heaven’s sake,” said the duke, leaning over the banisters, “ do you mean to ruin every thing by being so deuced careless ?”

“ As for that, if I *am* careless, why I have an additional claim on old oak-climber, as in that case, our genealogical tree would be much the same ; but for thy sake, gentle Bucks, I’ll be silent as an old maid’s parrot, a woman with a secret, or thine own tongue when big with a state plot that thyself hath conceived, and doth long to bring forth in face of the whole court.”

The duke did not wait for any more of this speech, but hurried up stairs to Miss Stewart's apartments, where the king was always to be found at that hour. "Who may be the party to-night, Andrew Wilford?" enquired he of one of the pages in waiting, whom he found in the ante-room, lightening one of his companion's pockets of a rouleau.

"His majesty," replied the obsequious Andrew, "is at play with the Chevalier de Gramont, Sir George Etherege, Lady Chesterfield, and my Lord Buckhurst; Miss Stewart, after waiting a whole hour for your grace, has, I believe, made Sir Charles Lyttleton deputy architect during your grace's absence, but I fancy *he* cannot manage *story* after *story*, as you do, my Lord Duke,* and therefore has not much to

* "It was impossible to have more beauty and less sense than this Frances Stewart, the king's favourite; her chief delight was in mimicry, and the construction of castles with packs of cards

build upon, if he counts upon her favour — hem !”

“ Pray,” interrupted the Duke, “ is the Duke of York here ?”

“ He is, my Lord.”

“ And whom may he be playing with ?”

“ I believe Miss Jennings is playing with him,” replied the sapient Andrew, with a look, in which knave and fool were so happily blended, as to render it a matter of impossibility to decide which predominated.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha !” laughed the giddy duke, and then turning to Wilford, and arranging his George and Garter with one hand, while he took Lord Ossory by the other, said —

“ My honest Andrew, I leave this young nobleman in your especial keep-

which the Duke of Buckingham used to erect for her ; and so gained her favour above all others. Vide Andrew Marvel's Works.

ing, till I return to claim him, or it may be to reclaim him, since he will of necessity pass half an hour in thy company, time enough, albeit, to corrupt twenty less incorruptible youths than he is ; and now, Worthy Will, do thine office."

Master Wilford made a low and patronizing bow to Lord Ossory, and then threw open the gilded doors to let the duke enter. At one table sat the merry monarch at cards with the party Andrew Wilford had described, and at another, the fair Stewart, swinging a pearl rosary to and fro with one hand, whilst on the other leant a head, which, had the Grecian artists seen, would have saved them the trouble of seeking in many, the model of that Helen, they might have here found in one ; her beautiful but unmeaning eyes seemed undecided, whether to cast glances of displeasure at the artificer of the card mansion before her, or looks of admiration at her own foot (the prettiest

in the world,) which was busily employed in trying to depose *Ninon* from an eider-down cushion, of which she monopolized more than the owner of the pretty foot in question thought fair; but all in vain; every *coup de pied* *Ninon* repaid by a somewhat bolder attack on the brilliants that clasped the little white satin slipper that assailed her; till wearied with the unequal contest, the forgiving beauty exclaimed, “*Ninon, mon ange, embrasse ta maman,*” upon which, *Ninon* sprang into her lap, and placing her two snowy paws on a neck that rivalled them, did as she was desired. “Tush!” said she to Sir Charles Lyttleton, who had been *faisant son possible* to please her, which he found to be impossible.

“You cannot build a castle as high as my hand; I must wait for the Duke of Buckingham; I hope he’ll come; but I think he will, don’t you, *Ninon*? but I must comb your pretty ears,” she continued, reaching a golden comb studded

with emeralds from a *chiffonière* that stood near her, that you may look nice for him, if he does, because he is so fond of you, and was so good to you to-day at Greenwich.

“Ah!” cried the Chevalier de Gramont, “*que je voudrait bien être coïffer à la Ninon!*”

“There are certainly different ways of being made happy,” observed Lord Chesterfield, with a sneer, as he stood behind his wife’s chair, and then thinking to pique *her*, by drawing her attention to the devoted persecution her *ci-devant* adorer, the Duke of York, was inflicting on the fair Jennings, added, addressing her, and glancing at him, “Who do you think the happiest man in the world?”

“Really, my Lord,” said the green-stockinged beauty, with a contemptuous curl of her pretty lip, “I can only give you the same answer that *Solon* gave *Cræsus* to a similar question. “*When you are dead,*” (she continued, fixing her

large eyes full on the Chevalier de Gramont,) “*I shall be able to determine.*”

The sapient earl, not finding the solution to his query the most agreeable in the world, had recourse to an expedient often resorted to by persons in similar situations, that of becoming the herald of some intelligence which the eyes and ears of every body present had already acquainted them with; and the Duke of Bucks having had the kindness to make his appearance just at this juncture, his lordship, perpetrating one of his most amiable smiles, turned to Miss Stewart, and said,

“Fair Lady, see how the fates wait upon your wishes; here *is* the Duke of Buckingham.”

“Oh! I’m so glad,” she cried, almost running to meet him. “But have you found that queer man? And, above all, have you brought the dwarf? And will you build me a castle with *three* packs

of cards, because Sir Charles Lyttleton says it's impossible, and I said, I knew *you* could do it?" And looking at the knight with the pettishness of a half triumphant, half disappointed spoilt child, as she concluded this brilliant harangue, she threw herself back in her chair, and laughed like a baby.

"I *have* found that queer man, Lady," (said the duke,) "I *have* brought the dwarf, and I *will* build you a castle with three packs of cards."

"Oh! nice, nice!" said the Stewart, clapping her hands with delight; "but where are they?" she continued, taking the duke by the arm, and looking round him.

"Not in my pocket," laughed his grace; "but if it be his majesty's pleasure, they shall be here anon."

"Odds fish!" cried the king, laying down his cards, "and have you really found them? why, George, all the Sir Hildebrands, Sir Caulines, and Sir Tris-

trams may hide their diminished heads, for thou art the very prince of knights errant; and now for the mystery of the medal, though 'tis easily guessed at; no doubt some graceless knave, who wishes for the honour, and still more for the profit of being our prime jester; but where are the varlets? We will e'en see them, and let them have their humour."

The duke whispered something in the king's ear.

"Bravely executed," said the latter, rising, "we will see him directly — and in the mean time you may bring the conjuror, and his coadjutor the dwarf here."

Saying which, the monarch and the duke left the room together; the former to give an audience to Lord Ossory, the latter to conduct Rochester and his wily page to Miss Stewart's apartments. — He was not long in finding them; and so completely changed was the earl's voice and manner, that even the Duke

of Buckingham was scarcely certain of his identity, as he ushered him into the room, where a crowd of his most intimate associates gathered round him, staring at him with all the wonder novelty excites, and never once dreaming that they were entitled to claim any of the privileges of acquaintanceship with the formidable looking personage before them ; — he entered at a most preposterously dignified pace, whilst the dwarf tumbled before him, with a rapidity of motion that baffled all attempts at discovering whether his evolutions were the effects of mechanism, or the dexterity of a human being. After having, in this manner, made the tour of the room, he came opposite the fair Stewart, and commenced a series of antics, that threw her into convulsions of laughter, till his master struck his wand three times heavily on the ground, when he instantly sprang upon his feet, and throwing up his cap and bells, turned his back to

Miss Stewart, and made her an inverse bow, almost to the very ground. After which, he remained as motionless, and as mute, as if he had been but a copy of humanity.

“How now, will you not let these ladies hear your voice vent itself in a song, Sirrah, since you will not condescend to breathe it into speech?” said the duke of Bucks; but the dwarf made no other answer, than by shaking his head, and placing his cap on the duke’s.

“’Twere a pity,” said the latter, returning it to him, “that I should deprive one of it, whom it becomes so well, especially as it does not fit *me*.”

“It only requires to be made *greater*,” replied the dwarf, untying a string, and again placing it on the duke’s head — who good humouredly said, “he perceived it.”

“*Dulce est decipere in loco*,” said Lord Arlington.

“A very good maxim that,” returned

the duke, “for a chamberlain, who *is* in place ; but the *in loco*, my good lord, makes all the difference, and I who am not in place” — “have the more merit,” interposed the Chevalier de Gramont, “in playing the fool in *all places*.” “Done, then,” cried the duke, with the most inimitable *sang froid*, “I’ll *play you for* a thousand, till the king returns.”

They were scarcely seated, when the dwarf sprang forward, and seizing all the cards upon the table, placed himself at Miss Stewart’s feet, and began erecting a castle, which, to her infinite astonishment, he soon completed with five packs of cards ; nothing could have kept her delight within bounds, but the fear of destroying the dwarf’s handy-work, which now stood far above his head ; — in the midst of the praises, she was bestowing on the little architect, the king returned ; who seemed, to the full, as

much diverted with the two mountebanks, as his silly favourite.

“ Well, thou king of conjurers,” said he, addressing Lord Rochester, “ and what may thy pleasure be with us ?”

“ To know *yours*, my liege,” replied the earl.

“ How now, speakest thou always in riddles, Sir Knave ? — or it may be that we take thee wrongly — and thou wouldst merely know, if we were fairly caught in the trap which thy wisdom laid for us this morning ; a trap, forsooth, of most classical origin ; thou wert no fool though ; a bait that could entrap a fair nymph, was the one of all others to suit us — but for our pleasure — ”

“ Ask him to sing ?” whispered the Stewart, who stood at his elbow — “ it must be so funny to hear him.”

“ Dost thou, or thy prime minister there, know ought of music ?” continued the king ; “ if so, it may go far to gain thy cause.”

The earl made a sign to Eden Green,
who, in his best voice, instantly sang the
following song : —

“ When love with unconfined wings
 Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
 To whisper at my grates ;
When I lye tangled in her haire,
 And fetter'd with her eye,
The birds that wanton in the aire
 Know no such libertie.

“ When flowing cups run swiftly round
 With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses crown'd,
 Our hearts with loyal flames ;
When thirsty griefe in wine we steepe,
 When healths and draughts go free.
Fishes that tipple in the deepe,
 Know no such libertie.

“ When linnet-like confined, I
 With shriller note shall sing
The mercye, sweetnesse, majesty,
 And glories of my king ;
When I shall voyce aloud how good
 He is, how great should be,
Th' enlarged windes, that curle the flood,
 Know no such libertie.

“ Stone wals do not a prison make,
Nor iron barres a cage ;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage :
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such libertie.” *

“ Our favourite song, by the law Harry,” cried the king, “and for that same thy boon shall be granted; even were it to the amount of a pension that should frighten thy father-in-law into an

* This sonnet, which possessed a high degree of fame among the old cavaliers, was written by Colonel Richard Lovelace, during his confinement in the Gatehouse, Westminster; to which he was committed by the House of Commons, in April 1642, for presenting a petition from the county of Kent, requesting them to restore the king to his rights, and to settle the government. This song was, therefore, a great favourite with Charles the Second. See Wood’s *Athenæ*, vol. ii. p. 228. ; where may be seen at large the affecting story of this writer; who, after having been distinguished for every gallant and polite accomplishment, the pattern of his own sex, and the admiration of the other, died in the lowest wretchedness, obscurity, and want in 1658. This song was entitled, “ To Althea from Prison.”

ague, brother, (turning to the Duke of York) or to the pardoning of the greatest rascal in our dominions, to the outraging of christian charity in all our bishops."

"Now then," said Lord Rochester, resuming his own voice, and throwing off his masquerade, to the astonishment of all present, and more especially to that of the king, "now that I have your majesty's most gracious promise of pardon, I need no longer this disguise; for the most loyal shape in which I could have the happiness to appear before you, Sire, is that of my own proper person."

"My Lord Rochester," said the king haughtily, "you are not, we perceive, yet cured of carrying your jests too far. We hold ourselves bound to the fulfilment of no promise extorted from us under false pretences; and therefore, we acknowledge *none to you*."

"Were your majesty's memory, (re-

plied the earl, still kneeling, and looking up at the king with an expression comically awful,) were your majesty's memory as good as your mercy is great, you would acknowledge yourself bound, Sire, even by the most *unequivocal* promise to pardon *me*."

" Prove it, (said the king,) and, worthless as you may be, you shall not have it to say that Charles Stuart broke his word."

" I would appeal to this fair company," said Lord Rochester, with a look meant to be that of triumphant virtue, " if your majesty did not, but five minutes since, in the abundance of your goodness aver, when yonder knave had finished that brave old cavalier song of Colonel Lovelace's, (God rest his loyal soul,) that for the sake of it, you would grant any boon we might ask — even to the pardoning of "*the greatest rascal in your dominions*," and *as such*, (he concluded, with downcast eyes, and a look of disclaiming mo-

desty,) I do not think I arrogate too much to myself, in claiming the fulfilment of your royal promise."

The frown which had lowered upon the king's brow, was obliged to yield to the scarcely suppressed laugh Lord Rochester's appeal had forced from all those to whom it was made ; and after his own mirth had subsided sufficiently to allow him to speak, he placed his hand on the earl's shoulder — exclaiming : —

"Look ye, my lords, a miracle! Rochester has spoken the truth, and as it is only fair that one miracle should work another, he has our pardon ; and verily, from the way we were inclined towards him not two hours since, nothing short of a miracle could have obtained it for him ; but see that a wonder so great as that of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, having once in his life spoken the truth, be duly chronicled among the remarkable events of our reign ; but George," he continued, turning to the

duke of Bucks, “we think we owe thee a grudge, if thou knewest this white-washed jackdaw under his borrowed plumes?”

“Your majesty,” replied the duke, “I think will acquit me of knowing Rochester, when he is so changed as to *know himself*.”

“True, true,” laughed the king; “but how comes it, Rochester, that we have heard nothing of thee during the whole time we have not seen thee? We knew thou wert not dead; because, had that been the case, England would have been, for a second time, edified with public thanksgiving for the plague of London having ceased.”

“*Nunquam mores quos extuli refero, aliquid ex eo quod composui turbatur: aliquid ex his quæ fugavi, redit;*” saith Seneca, “and I aim not at going beyond him; but if your majesty have any curiosity to know how I employed my genius whilst retired from the busy world,

(a genius that renovated greatly in the solitude into which my mournful exile plunged me,) I have kept a diary, which is, Sire, as the author ever has been, at your service." Saying which, he beckoned to Eden Green, and touching the spring of his hump, to the no small amusement of every one present, drew from it a somewhat voluminous MS. The king was much diverted at this new style of *escritoir*; and turning to the Chevalier de Gramont said: —

"Chevalier, I do not think that even in France, they could have invented any thing more ingenious; is it not very extraordinary?"

"*Point du tout, Sire,*" replied the chevalier; "*sans doute,* (placing his hand on the diary,) "*il y'en a bien assez là dedans, pour donner des bosse à tout le monde.*"

"*Parbleu! je le crois bien, vous avez raison, chevalier,*" said the king, laughing immoderately. "We expect to be much

improved, Rochester, by the perusal of this said diary of thine ; as we firmly believe in the efficacy of the Spartan method of correcting errors ; but it is now late — so go thy way, John.”

“ So, please your majesty, and what way may that be ?” enquired the earl.

“ Even the way thou hast always gone ; to the d — l,” said the king.

“ *A revoir* then, *mon prince*,” muttered Rochester, as he bowed out of the apartment.

“ I have always heard, (said the Duke of Buckingham, when he and the earl found themselves in the street,) that fortune favoured fools ; but I never knew her to favour knaves, as she has done thee to-day, John.”

“ Ah,” replied his companion, “ that is because I was flanked by a — ; but I thank thee, George, for the part thou hast taken in this day’s destiny ; but remember thou dost not fail me in Tower-

street the day after to-morrow ; and now fare thee well.”

“ Had you not better remain with me for the rest of the night, as it is now very late ? ” said the duke.

“ No, no, this has been a day of miracles ; besides, it would not be politic to disobey so soon after getting into favour — and didst not hear old Rowly tell me to go to the d—l ? so I’ll even do his bidding, and go home to Lady Rochester.”

Having arrived at York-place, these worthies exchanged adieus, and separated for the night.

CHAP. XV.

LADY Cordelia, from the agitation and excitement she had suffered by the persecution of Sir Charles Sedley, did not miss her gold chain, this really *gage d'amour*, till she arrived at home; and was in despair when she found it actually gone. To this chain was affixed a golden heart, containing in its core a lock of pale chesnut hair, more precious to her than existence, and which in its loss seemed now to extinguish the only spark of joy to light her way through life. — Alone, unfriended, unbeloved by him whose love she prized, this solitary relic alone remained of all that was dear to her on earth. It had proved her solace in many an hour of sadness. Her grief and despair were boundless.

By dawn of day she traversed Green-

wich Park in every direction ; all search was vain ; the heart and chain were gone for ever.

Rebecca, on the former evening, remarked with wonder and surprise the changed appearance of Lady Cordelia on her joining her. Though not prone to suspicion, yet the evident traces of tears, her flushed cheek, and agitated frame, made Rebecca gaze on her with a look of anxious and enquiring curiosity, as imagining that she had got rid of her to fulfil an appointment with Sir Charles Sedley, whom she had seen walk abruptly from her with hurried step.

Lady Cordelia remained silent, but was obliged to take Lady Berry's arm for support ; she trembled so violently. — “ You are ill, dearest Lady Cordelia,” said Rebecca, with concern ; “ something has flurried you ; was it quite right,” she added, timidly, “ to choose a solitary bench in so public and gay a

spot as Greenwich Park for your *séjour* at this hour of night?"

"Not quite," she returned, with a heavy sigh; "but, on honour, I had made no assignation; though certainly I have been tormented by that court-fly Sir Charles Sedley."

Rebecca made no reply.

Lady Cordelia said, in a hurried accent, "It is late; we had better take boat instead of joining the gay throng, and return to Whitehall directly."

"Certainly," Rebecca replied. "I left Sir Ambrose engaged in his laboratory; but it is full time I was at home."

They were soon landed at Whitehall, where the friends separated.

Early on the following morning Rebecca, whose anxiety respecting the Lady Cordelia had never slept, paid her an early visit; she found her just returned from Greenwich, and lying on a couch in a state of such grief and despondency, she regarded her with sincere pity.

Lady Cordelia at length raising her head from the pillow on which it rested, exclaimed, "You look so placid, so happy, dear Lady Berry, how I envy you. She kindly pressed Rebecca's hand, adding with a look of anguish, and a suppressed sigh, "but you are so good."

"Are you not happy?" she returned—"Oh, no!" she exclaimed, tears flowing from her eyes.

"Why are you not happy," dear lady; "have you not every thing to make you—youth, loveliness, rank, splendour, adulation."

"Do you think," she eagerly interrupted, "such paltry possessions constitute the felicity of life? Listen," she continued, "to the cold, heartless, unfeeling, and they may tell you so; — but listen to one of ardent feelings, sensitively alive to kindness, and more than equally so to unkindness, and I will tell you, from sad experience, that riches,

splendour, rank, nay even beauty, are all inadequate, when the heart is broken.

“Such,” she continued, in a parox-ism of despair, “has been my fate through life, that whatever I have loved and cherished with peculiar fondness, I have been deprived of from some unlucky fatality, as in the present instance. Mine has proved a destiny impossible to avert.”

“Oh, talk not thus wildly,” cried Rebecca, greatly shocked, and sighing deeply. “It is mistrusting an overruling Providence.”

“Quite the contrary,” replied the lady. “It is a proof of the greatest reliance on Providence. Is it not presumptuous in us to suppose, by any precaution of our own we can avert the will of heaven? Remember, I do not mean that we are wilfully to err; that would, indeed, be wicked; but what is pre-ordained, can we prevent? Answer me that question,” fixing her eyes with earnestness on Lady Berry.

“I believe,” she answered, with timid apprehension, “that we are so peculiarly the care of the great Omnipotent, that as he wisely orders, so we, the creatures of his overruling power, must be regulated by that power, which only knows what is best for us. To submit to that will can alone render us worthy his immediate and ever watchful protection.

“But this,” she added gravely, “is, dear Lady Cordelia, a subject so far beyond my comprehension — so deep — so awful — so undefinable, it is best at once to drop it.”

The lady remained pensive and silent; at length Rebecca cast her eyes towards a broken guitar, which hung suspended by a ribbon to the wainscot.

“I would ask you to sing,” she exclaimed, “but your instrument, like your heart, has ceased to vibrate to the touch of joy.”

“How true!”

Lady Cordelia rose from the couch,

and went to the harpsichord, which she touched, accompanying with her voice, in a low, rich, pathetic strain, the following air, the poetical effusion of the moment:

“ My lyre is like to me, — neglected ;
A useless burthen now it stands ;
By all who once admired — rejected,
The sport and scorn of vulgar hands.

“ Time was, when deck’d with ribbons rare,
Across the bosom it was hung ;
And only touch’d with tend’rest care,
It answer’d to the voice that sung.

“ But now, for all its charms are o’er,
Of former talent but the token ;
Its sweetest sounds are heard no more —
Its chords are — as my heart is — broken.”*

The tender, soft melody of the above pathetic little air, the plaintiveness of the words, and the melting tone with which it was sung, powerfully affected Rebecca, as, with tearful eyes, she regarded the lady.

With her caressing manner, she ex-

* The author is indebted to Lady Caroline Lamb for the very beautiful lines here inserted.

claimed, "You pity me, you feel for me, dear Lady Berry," as she pressed her to her heart.

"Is it possible to do otherwise when I see your grief; and from whatever cause it springs, dear Lady Cordelia, allow me to become a participator; confide in me and disclose it."

"Never!" she interrupted vehemently. "That were indeed to betray my weakness. — I am proud, Rebecca, nor shall the cause of all my sufferings triumph, though my heart should break."

Delicacy prevented her urging the subject further.

Music had a powerful influence over Lady Cordelia in soothing every turbulent feeling; though Lady Berry was not skilled in the science, yet she possessed sufficient taste to awaken pleasure by the tender sweetness of her voice. She went to the harpsichord, and, for the first time in her life, gave the following spontaneous effusion, to which she sang :

“ Alas ! that still this is the fate
Of hearts too fond, of lutes too soft ;
The pulse too fine, the chord too sweet,
Alas ! they make the fate they meet.
For ever heart or lute to pass
 A world so desolate and lone,
The lute-chords should be strung with steel,
 The heart-pulse should be turn'd to stone.
Weep for the heart — weep for the lute ;
 And would that weeping could restore
The sweetness of their former life,
 And bid the lone one weep no more.”*

When Rebecca ceased, Lady Cordelia hastily sprang from the couch, and in a tone of charmed rapture, cried, “ How beautiful ! oh, it is too beautiful ! ” as she kissed the glowing cheek of the fair Rebecca, who abashed, though gratified, now took leave.

* The above stanzas are from the pen of L. E. L. ; they were not intended to meet the public eye, but are too elegant a composition to be omitted.

CHAP. XVI.

LADY CORDELIA, young, beautiful, followed, and admired, was, at the age of nineteen, the idol of her parents, that is, their *pride* ; for parental love is often nothing more ; her father, the Earl of Dorset (of whom Bishop Burnet gives the following character), “ was bountiful, even to running himself into difficulties, and charitable to a fault ; for he commonly gave all he had about him, when he met an object that moved him ; but he was so lazy, that though the king seemed to court him to be a favourite, he would not give himself the trouble that belonged to that post ; he hated the court, and despised the king, when he saw he was neither generous or tender hearted.”

Lord Orford also says of him, that

“ he was the finest gentleman of the voluptuous court of Charles the Second, and the gloomy one of King William ; he had as much wit as his first master, or his contemporaries Buckingham and Rochester, without the royal want of feeling, the duke’s want of principle, or the earl’s want of thought : the latter said with astonishment, ‘ that he did not know how it was, but Lord Dorset might do any thing, and yet was never to blame ; ’ it was not that he was free from the failings of humanity, but he had the tenderness of it too ; which made every body excuse whom every body loved, for even the asperity of his verses seems to have been forgiven to —

“ The best good man, with the worst natured muse.”

The countess was what a wife should be, a counterpoise to the failings, (*anglicé*, weaknesses, amiabilities, and imprudencies of her husband,) in short, she was a complete *clever woman*. Am-

bitious, prudent, and political, one who never mortgaged future *interest* for present *pleasure*; she had brilliancy enough to dazzle, and solidity enough to avoid being dazzled; no one possessed to a greater degree that nucleus of policy, the art of crouching in order to spring; her study was human nature, and she had taken the only true method of gaining a thorough knowledge of this most abstruse of all sciences,—that of quelling and subduing her own feelings and passions, in order to watch and mould those of others to her purpose. Her *actions* always produced the *effect* of virtue; her *motives*, she took care none should analyze, not excepting herself; with fools she never shewed wisdom, (save the wisdom of concealing it;) with the wise she never betrayed folly. What *she* planned, she determined *others* should *execute*; but she always managed so as to make them give themselves full credit for the *will* as well as the deed,

thus avoiding the most unpardonable of all offences among weak minds, and shallow intellects, that of apparent superiority. She knew that those who would govern effectually, must conceal the sceptre of authority : but *consistency* was the great bulwark of her conduct, which precluded any one from doubting the soundness of her judgment, without, at the same time, questioning their own. Such was the brilliant, fascinating, but cold-hearted mother of Lady Cordelia, and as such, it was not surprising that *she* did not view with any very favourable eyes the increasing attachment of her daughter and the young Lord Ossory, whom fortune had not dealt quite so lavishly with as nature; yet do not let it be supposed, that she evinced any symptoms of coolness or displeasure towards him; on the contrary, none could show him more affectionate attention, even to an *apparently* maternal interest in his welfare ; no wonder then,

that both equally deceived, the lovers should feel nothing but rapture in the present, and see nothing but happiness in the future; but there was a time that the wily countess knew must come, and then it was, that she looked for the accomplishment of her plans relative to her daughter; that time *did* come,—the time when the young earl was to leave England for Venice, at that period the ordeal of fashion, folly, and vice that every young man of note was obliged to pass through, before he was deemed eligible to breathe the *pure* atmosphere of the British Court.

It was a gloomy September evening, a funereal pageant of dark clouds almost obscured the rays of the setting sun as it beamed its last farewell to day. Lady Cordelia was sitting alone with her mother; not a word past between them, for each had their eyes fixed on an open volume, which neither read. “Ah!” thought Lady Cordelia, as she raised her’s

to the window, "*he* is going away, and the very heavens look sorrowful."

"I wonder," said the countess, at length breaking the silence, "that Ossory has not been here to-day; he surely would not go without wishing us good bye; besides, your father has some letters which he promised to take."

Her daughter made no reply; she could not; there was a tightness at her heart that almost overpowered her at the bare idea of her mother's ranking such a surmise within the pale of possibility; and yet, had she been in his place, she thought she would not spend elsewhere the time that might be passed with her; but *then*, his father *might* have detained him; he *might* have been obliged to go to Whitehall, and once there, it was, she knew, no easy matter to get away; in short, a thousand things *might* have happened. She was on the point of framing another conjecture, when the door opened, and "Lord Ossory" was an-

nounced. He was in his travelling dress, and looked pale and ill ; but Lady Cordelia only saw *him*, and felt that she loved him better then than when she had seen him look handsomer and happier, winning the admiration, and it might be, the love of thousands besides herself.

“ We — that is, I really thought you meant to go without seeing us,” said the countess, extending her hand to him.

“ Go without seeing you !” he replied, echoing her words, and looking at Cordelia, and then added, with a faint smile, “ how long is it since your ladyship has had reason to think me such a self-tormentor ?”

“ Oh, I don’t know,” said the lady with one of her most bewitching smiles ; “ but as you have a very sincere regard for us, I only thought you might be one of those romantic personages whose feelings are all frittered away in treble refined paroxysms of sentiment ; and so

thought the parting might be too much for you."

"No, certainly not, unless *you* do," said the earl, fixing his very expressive eyes on her with rather more meaning than she seemed willing to comprehend; for rising hastily, she said —

"My dear Ossory, excuse me for a few minutes, for I must go and see if the earl's letters are ready, and tell him that you are here, for you know you are such a favourite of his, that he would never forgive us, were we to let you go without seeing him; but you will sup with us, will you not?"

The earl assented, and her ladyship left the room.

"And is this really the last evening I shall be with you for a whole year?" said Lord Ossory, turning to Lady Cordelia.

"Cordelia," he continued, pressing her hand to his lips, as he knelt before her, "my own dear love, what hope am

I to take with me to live upon during this weary waste of time and absence?"

"Every hope — every wish of mine," said the weeping Cordelia; scarcely knowing what she said, and only feeling that all she loved best in the world, was about to leave her — perhaps, for ever! for who is there that has not felt (if they have felt at all) a parting scene forebode, that there would *never* be a future meeting? — who is there that, at such a moment, has not recalled the change that chance, and time, and distance have wrought for others? — then who is there that may dare to hope, time, chance, and change will be more merciful to them? I know not — but Cordelia was not one; her gloom deepened; so did the twilight; she was not sorry for it, for she would rather imagine her lover's features than *see* them, as it was for the last time.

"Will you not speak to me, dearest?" he said, kissing away the tears that were falling fast on the hand he still held.

“Speak to me, Cordelia, and tell me how it will be, when next that moon shall rise upon us both ; but, ah ! what worlds of time and space shall I have to live through before then.”

In turning to look at the soft light that was now filling the heavens, a ringlet of Lady Cordelia’s hair got entangled in a slight gold chain that hung around her lover’s neck.

“See,” said he, liberating the imprisoned curl, “see how even chance conspires to link us together ; is not this a good omen, dear one ?”

“How superstitious you are,” said Lady Cordelia, smiling through all her tears.

“And what if I am, Cordelia ; love is a species of idolatry, (at least mine for you,) and, therefore, not even you can divest me of my superstition ; but as I cannot bear to possess any thing in which you have no part, I must try and infect you with it,” he continued, throw-

ing the chain playfully round her neck ; “ this chain came from the East, and there is a deep, deep spell upon every link. Doubt me but for a moment,” said he, smiling, “ and the ore will look no longer bright ; pass one whole hour without thinking of me, and it will become insupportably heavy under the weight of my affliction ; forsake me, and every link will break, as will my heart.”

“ Really,” said Lady Cordelia, almost laughing, “ you have taken care of yourself ; but, pray, by what signs and wonders am *I* to be made acquainted with *your* delinquency, if such a *miracle* should ever take place ?”

“ You are right in calling it a miracle, Cordelia, for it would be one ; yet you need no *separate* tokens of me, for are we not one in life, heart, and soul ?”

“ Very well,” said she, looking archly at him, and calculating on her fingers, “ *how* I shall know that when the ore looks

dim *you* are doubting *me*; when its weight oppresses me, that *you* are not thinking of *me*, and when the links sever! that then is the time for *my* heart to break. Ah! what a fatal gift."

"I promise you," said the earl, smiling, "that had I ever suspected logic (and such logic) could issue out of those rosy portals, that should be sacred to love alone, *I* should as soon have thought of falling in love with my old tutor as with you; but the crime is now committed, and I am so hardened, that there is no chance of my repenting; but all this is folly; and this is no time for trifling. Ah, Cordelia," he continued, looking mournfully at her, "*if* I should find you gone for ever, when I return — that is, if I should find you another's!"

"And what other's *could* I be?" she replied, timidly, raising her beautiful eyes to his, with an expression of truth and tenderness that out-weighed whole worlds of vows; "for what other is there

like you, Ossory? what other have I — loved, (she would have said, but changed it to) known from childhood?”

“ Yes, yes,” said he, pressing her burning hand to his heart, that beat with the wild tumult of a thousand conflicting feelings, “ we *have* known, we *have* loved from childhood; others have done the same, and yet, Cordelia, they have lived to live apart — lived to love — no more!”

“ Dear Ossory,* you *are* superstitious, since you speak of impossibilities as possibilities. You see that moon; you see the shadows it reflects, even ours; if it changes, so must they; *you* are the source from which *my* all of light and life is derived; yet, if *you* change —

* The earl *had* a Christian name; but that name was Thomas!!! The reader will therefore excuse further mention of it; as every one, at all enlightened as to metaphysics (even gentlemen who themselves labour under the name), must feel convinced, that apostrophising a lover by such a name would annihilate love itself.

though, yes, I too must change, for then *I* should, indeed, darken into nothing."

"My own love, my own dear Cordelia, is human change the effect of human will? if it were, I should not be leading you now — no, no; we are the mere tools (too often of our own blind impulse) but always the passive instruments of a superior agency, which none may avert, and still less control; but when I spoke of losing you, I meant not, for I thought not, that it would be with your own free will; but there are those who can give people wills that are *not* their own, yet make them think they *are* — the evil one deceives and infatuates, before he destroys; before he *could* destroy; and who is there shall say, I will not be deceived — I will not be infatuated — I will believe nothing but what bears the impress of truth? for who is there, that may say, where most is falsehood, *what is truth?*"

Lady Cordelia was about to reply,

when the door opened, and her father and mother, preceded by a page with lights, entered. The conversation (if a few broken sentences could be called conversation) of course became general. Lord Dorset's manner to the young earl was that of genuine kindness and regret. The countess's, that of maternal affection, how genuine we will not pretend to determine. Supper was announced; the meal passed in utter silence; and when Lord Ossory rose to depart, the earl was unaffectedly affected, and stammered out a "God bless you, my boy;" her ladyship presented her fair hand to him, and said, with a faint voice, "you will write to us, Ossory?" and wept as she said it; she best knew why. Lady Cordelia could breathe no adieu in exchange for her lover's "farewell, dearest;" but when the door closed on him, she hurried to her own room, and, for the first time in her life, *felt* what wretchedness was; in vain she recalled every look

and tone of him, whom she had loved almost since she had begun to live; it might not avail; for when could imagination ever yet fill the aching void reality had left? there was no rest for her; she could but wake and weep. Throughout the gloom of that eternal night, her lover's "farewell" rang in her ear like the knell of every hope; misery, in her long, long catalogue, has no torture like it. — The mere word *is* the tomb of happiness.

*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*

Weeks and months past; for time does not stand still, even with the unhappy. At first, every courier brought regular letters from the young earl, and every letter was but the transcript of a heart devoted to his "dear, dear Cordelia;" but soon they became less frequent; and at length ceased altogether! "Could it be that he *was* changed, and loved her no longer? Oh, no, no; she was sure

that was not the case, the letters might have been lost — or, (ah, bitter thought!) he might have been, might still be ill; yet even *that*, any thing was more bearable than her first surmise. Still days came and went, and brought no tidings from or of him; and the countess grew clamorous in her regrets as to the fact, and her conjectures as to the cause of his silence, and even *expressed* much more confidence in his unalterable constancy and regard, than her daughter had, for some time, dared to *feel*; but things could not remain at this point for ever; and the kind mother soon changed her position to more advantageous ground, by dropping vague and delicate hints on the perfidy of *all men*, and then, as if by accident, but on purpose, allowing flashes of indignation to escape her, at the idea of her daughter being subjected to the perfidy of any man; till at length came the broad unambiguous assertion, that “Lady Cordelia Germaine should have more

pride than to let her bloom wither for the falsehood of such a worthless strippling.” All these remarks, and still more the circumstances that called them forth, had their weight with Lady Cordelia. — She tried daily, hourly, to forget Lord Ossory ; but memory will not be banished at a mandate ; she even called her pride to her assistance, which painted his conduct in the most glaring colours ; but then came love, and softened them all ; and pride’s most powerful argument is weak to love’s least. To these eternal struggles with herself, loss of health succeeded ; in trying to vanquish, she was vanquished, as many others have been.

“ Yes, it *is* wrong of me, after such conduct, to think of him more,” said Lady Cordelia aloud, in answer to her own thoughts, one day as she was sitting at work with her mother, in the very room where the subject of those thoughts had, for the last time, breathed vows of eternal love to her.

“What — then you *have* heard,” said the countess, raising her eyes from her embroidery, and fixing them on her daughter, her cheek kindling as she spoke, “you have heard of his” — and then suddenly checking herself, as if with a great effort to control some powerful emotion, she again bent her eyes upon her work, and remained perfectly silent.

“I have heard nothing,” said Lady Cordelia; “I even asked the Duke of Ormond the other day, if *he* had heard from his son, and he had not — but *you have* heard something, dearest mother, I conjure you tell me what it is; I can bear any thing and every thing now,” — and she sank back in her chair, not able to bear her own feelings.

“No, no; I have heard nothing,” (this at least was true,) said the countess, turning away her face to avert her child’s earnest gaze, which even *she* could not brook — “at least nothing —”

“It will not grieve me, indeed it will

not," interrupted Lady Cordelia passionately ; " only tell me the worst, tell me that he cares no longer for me — that he loves an — another — and from this day you shall see me an altered being."

" Another !" said the countess with a lip of scorn and eye of fire, that were not altogether assumed, for she scorned herself while she spoke — " if it were *only another*" —

Lady Cordelia heard no more, but from that day she *was* an *altered being* ; that is, she had that over-powering and fatiguing gaiety which assumed spirits always create, and which is so over-acted, and so much " o'ersteps the modesty of Nature," as scarcely to deceive the most ordinary and shallow observer ; *hers* did *not* deceive any one except herself, for she fancied that she had succeeded in forgetting the past, whilst in reality the very efforts she made to do so, brought it more vividly to her imagination. " I do not wear his chain, (she would repeat

to herself); I do not read his letters, or even look at his flowers, which, like his love, are faded now;" but in the midst of all these eulogiums on her own forbearance and resolution, she never once had the courage to destroy his gifts; yet if she had, she could not have destroyed her remembrance of him who gave them, nor of one of those gone-by times, whose tales they all too dearly told.

* * * * *

None dressed so well, none looked so beautiful, none were so flattered, followed, and even loved as Lady Cordelia; with her, to be seen was to be admired. No wonder then, that splendid offers poured in on all sides; if she did not accept them, her parents did not urge her; amid this vortex of flattery, folly, and adulation, had she not possessed a *heart*, her head might have been turned; but the heart often saves the head —

would that as often the head could save the heart.

At this period, Mr. Trevillion became a constant guest at Lord Dorset's; he was a gentleman, neither old nor young; neither good nor bad; handsome nor ugly; learned or illiterate; clever nor stupid; in short, he abounded in all the negative virtues that constitute "*a good sort of man*," and possessed *one positive* virtue—an unencumbered estate of forty-two thousand a year. As his visits became more frequent, and his attentions to Lady Cordelia more marked, the countess took numberless occasions to lament to her daughter (with gentle sighs, and a not disfiguring number of tears,) the earl's past extravagance, which had put it totally out of his power to give his daughter a suitable dower; which, however, had no other effect on Lady Cordelia than to draw from her a philosophical reflection, that, as she was without fortune, she should

be the better able to judge, whether she was really loved for herself or not; to this her lady mother assented, with even more than her usual suavity; but still *this* was not what *she* wanted; however, she was too great an adept in human nature, and too old a proficient in moulding others to her will, to be disheartened by such a failure. She changed her mode of attack, and a certain reduction in the splendour of the establishment at Dorset House was soon perceptible; then she was for ever planning before her daughter, improvements and alterations; *thinking* of new furniture, and new jewels, and ending every thing with a “No, I cannot though—the earl can’t afford it, and we must really try, my dear child, and not leave you quite portionless, for Heaven only knows if your brother George may be always as fond of you as he is now.”

In short, Lady Dorset wished her daughter should marry Mr. Trevillion!

that she *should* wish it may be a matter of surprise, when she might have had her choice from among the “magnates of the land ;” — true, but then few, if any, of the “magnates of the land” had, like Mr. Trevillion, an unencumbered estate of forty-two thousand a year; and the proud countess knew that rank, unaccompanied with wealth, was but a mortgage on the pride of its possessor, and a pensioner on the homage of others. Besides, there were few men whom she could have such complete control over, as the easy, tractable Horace Trevillion, Esq. of Borrowdale, in the county of York; and with *his* money and *her* management, she might hereafter, if she pleased, get him made a duke; therefore, she determined that he should marry her daughter; and what had Lady Dorset ever determined *should be*, that had *not* been? * * *

* * * * *

Mr. Trevillion, at length, summoned

sufficient courage to make the beautiful, the brilliant, the worshipped, the high-born Lady Cordelia Germaine an offer of his hand, and the beautiful, brilliant, high-born Lady Cordelia Germaine summoned sufficient courage to accept it. In doing so, she argued, that she should play the heroine, in sacrificing her own inclination to that of her parents or rather parent, for her father was perfectly passive, further than warmly wishing her happiness in all things; moreover she decided, that by this marriage she should pique her faithless lover by showing him that he had not broken her heart, which appeared to have been his aim; and, finally, she did much to assure herself that *she really had* ceased to care about *him*; but the very pains she took to prove this, proved that she *had not*. How many like her have tried to deceive themselves? and, like her, found too late the folly of such an attempt? To argue against nature is indeed

“Vain philosophy, and false reasoning all.”

* * * * *

The day preceding that of her nuptials, as Lady Cordelia was walking on a terrace before the house with her destined husband, she stopped suddenly, and with a hurried voice and crimson cheek said, “Mr. Trevillion, I suppose you are aware that I once loved Lord Ossory? at least I think it right to tell you so.”

Mr. Trevillion *was* aware of it, and bowed his acknowledgment of the fact; and after an awkward silence of a few minutes, said, taking the hand of his bride elect in his, “But you do not love him now?”

“I should think, Sir,” said the proud beauty, withdrawing her hand somewhat haughtily, and she *thought* she spoke the truth, “I should think, Sir, that my marrying *you* was a sufficient proof that I *do not*.”

Mr. Trevillion thought so too, at least he fancied that he *ought to think* so, and thinking one *ought to think* a thing is, in nine cases out of ten, the same thing as thinking it.

* * *

Lady Cordelia gave *one* look to Lord Ossory's fond letters, faded flowers, and fatal chain ; one sigh to what *had* been, a thousand to what might be, and *married*——Mr. Trevillion!

But, alas ! what are the projects that the wisest form, and the most successful achieve ? Six months after her daughter's marriage, Lady Dorset breathed her last, and the year following her demise, Mr. Trevillion died of a brain fever, leaving his beautiful wife the uncontrolled management of his whole fortune.

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Young, beautiful, rich, free, followed,

flattered, and admired, it was not likely that Lady Cordelia should be without a sufficient number of detractors. The men whom she rejected, pronounced her a coquet; the women she eclipsed decided that she was greatly made up, and that any one who dressed as handsomely would look as well; that she performed many benevolent and charitable actions, none could deny; but then there was a great deal of ostentation in this sort of conduct, and popularity was her *forte*, therefore what merit had she? Others thought it a great piece of incongruity, now that poor Mr. Trevillion (whom they *knew* she never loved) had been dead two years, and that she was the gayest of the gay, her still continuing to wear black; unless, indeed, she fancied it became her, which was most likely her real reason, as she certainly had what is generally called a very fine skin, though they could not say they admired that excessive fairness.

And why was Lady Cordelia the gayest of the gay? or rather why did she try to appear so? and study to dazzle and to vanquish in every circle that she moved in? and though she succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations that vanity could have formed, why was she in reality *wretched*? I know not, except that she *loved*; and what is love but the complex antithesis of the human heart? the focus of opposing feelings? It causes us to hope we know not what, yet at the same time to anticipate evil; to feel that fear is but the prediction of truth, yet to disregard its warnings; it gives us the daring of heroism, and yet infects us with the reluctance of cowardice; it banishes all littleness from the mind, yet humbles it to itself; for those who would sacrifice *nothing* to ambition, interest, or fame, too often sacrifice *every* thing to love; with them love is frequently a passion, comprising as much *vanity* as affection; perhaps, because it is *but* the

passion of a man's life ; it is the principle of a woman's, and therefore with them totally free from all those sudden ebbs and flows which impulse creates. The estimation in which men hold women is often nothing more than a reaction of the opinions and admiration of others ; few men would venture to choose a wife (any more than to wear a coat) that was not the fashion ; for which reason they seldom think of women but as they are *thought of*.

It might be from knowing this, that Lady Cordelia, while she only coveted the *love of one*, courted the admiration of *all* ; it would, she thought, give her a value in his eyes which she might intrinsically want. How many have and do act like her ; and how little cause men would have to be vain, if they could guess how often women dress to look beautiful ; converse to be agreeable, witty, brilliant, and fascinating, and do their worst in witchery, whether in mu-

sic or in motion ; not, indeed, with a view to please those who are then pouring flattery into their ear, further than with a hope that those praises may reach some far distant one ; — and this rever-sionary sort of value, is all that a woman, while she loves one man, can attach to the admiration of every man or any man ; therefore, ye lords of the creation, exult not too much in *your flattery* and *women's folly*.

Whether Lady Cordelia acted on this principle or not, it is certain that she sought admiration, and gained the admiration she sought. It is equally certain that Lord Ossory's chain was now never a moment from her neck. Once more time had for her but one epoch, that had been the *present*, it was now the *past*. Again, memory and imagination became *one thought*, and life was but *one feeling*. The void love had left in her heart, was still darkened by his shadow, and peopled with those my-

riads of vague hopes, which constitute the fulness of vacancy. A door could not open but she raised her eyes to it, hoping — what? — *Nothing*. And yet she turned gloomily away when reality did not present to her the form which was never absent from her memory, though reason told her that at that moment seas rolled between them. No letter could be brought her, though she *knew* it was not from *him*, but every feeling sickened into disappointment, when she *saw* that it was not; for love can disappoint us even in what we have *not hoped*.

She had of late grown *very, very* intimate with Miss Hamilton; and as the beautiful Elizabeth lived at her uncle's, the Duke of Ormond's, she of course was in the way of knowing as much as could be known about her cousin Osory; but that much was not a great deal. She told Lady Cordelia one morning, "that she had just got a letter

from him; that he was then at Paris; spoke much of the brilliancy of the French court; but was neither very well or very happy." To hear that he was not well was torture — to hear that he was unhappy not *quite* so much so. But as Miss Hamilton had never known of Lady Cordelia's engagement to her cousin, and consequently never heard of his inconstancy, nothing more was said on the subject.

It will not now be wondered at, that Lady Cordelia should be in despair at the loss of her chain; or that from that vague sort of hope which constantly attended her, more than from any belief in the science, that she at length yielded to her maid's importunities to apply to an infallible Italian astrologer, then residing in Tower-street, as the only chance of regaining it; "and, indeed, my Lady," said the pretty Alice, in concluding her oration, "he *has* told and foretold

such things as would perfectly astonish you.”

“ Well then,” said Lady Cordelia, “ I *will* write, and ask Lady Berry if she’ll go with me to-morrow.”

CHAP. XVII.

LADY Berry (having replied to Lady Cordelia's billet in the affirmative,) came at an early hour the next morning to accompany her to the astrologer's, Sir Ambrose having left home still earlier, and said that he should not return till late in the day. Lady Cordelia was not yet ready; and her page left the room, saying he would inform her ladyship that Lady Berry was come.

The apartment she was in was more than splendid; it abounded in all that could charm, of literature, music, painting, art, nature, and taste. "Yet, I know not how it is," thought Rebecca, "with all this, these rooms have always an air of melancholy, almost amounting to desolation, about them. I wonder if Lady Cordelia *is* happy?"

As she formed this conjecture, her eye rested on a collection of loose papers that lay on a table before her, half hid among some flowers that the page had been about to place in a vase when she entered. The writing was Lady Cordelia's ; and, as she perceived they were only verses, she could not resist the curiosity that prompted her to read the following lines :—

'Tis well, thou world, that thou should'st think
Me proud, and cold, and vain ;
I would not have *thee* view each link
That forms my heart's true chain.

I would not *thou* should'st know the tears
That dim my smiling eyes,
Or see hopes blighted into fears,
Or hear my burning sighs.

Too well I've loved — too much believed,
Still found the future pain ;
And those who've been so long deceived,
May scarcely trust again.

To flowers that wither in the blast,
And feelings in their spring,
The cold, dark shadows of the past
Is all that time can bring.

But *I*, who bear my weight of life,
 Unguided, and alone,
Must learn to quell the idle strife
 'Tween fate and feeling sown ;

Must mask with smiles an aching heart ;
 And 'mid the bright array,
Where each one acts another's part,
 Look gayest of the gay.

Oh ! would that I indeed could *be*
 The careless thing I seem ;
Or still believe, fair Hope, in thee,
 And dream again joy's dream.

But tho' Hope's radiant sun is set,
 That lent youth's morn such light,
Its fairy rays are ling'ring yet
 Thro' sorrow's darken'd night.

They linger yet — but not to throw
 False halos round my love,
Of earthly things whose bliss is woe,
 But guide my thoughts above.

Think, then, thou world, e'en as thou wilt,
 What boots thy love to me ?
Let those who know less grief than guilt
 Seek fame and praise from thee.

Thy purchas'd praise, thy heartless smiles,
 But harrow and betray,
Like that false light, whose elfin wiles
 Lead wanderers' steps astray.

“No, Lady Cordelia is *not* happy,” said Rebecca, as she replaced the lines ; and yet, at that moment, one of the most joyous laughs she had ever heard met her ear. On turning to ascertain from whom it proceeded, she beheld Lady Cordelia ! looking at her through a half-open door ; not, indeed, as she had been wont to behold her, but equipped from head to foot as a country-woman — her beautiful golden hair confined, and almost hid behind a close, linen cap ; a black wimple or hood shading the contour of her face. On her neck she wore a geranium-coloured kerchief, plaited down the back, and relieved by a tucker of snow-white cambric. The vivid red of her handkerchief formed a pretty and picturesque contrast to the bright purple of her short and thickly-plaited woollen petticoat ; her stockings were of the same deep blue, (happily the only species of blue-stock-ingism known in those days,) with red

clocks edged with white ; while her little feet did penance in a pair of nailed shoes, two inches thick, and had, moreover, to endure the weight of a pair of enormous silver buckles.

“ How kind it is of you to come,” she said, addressing Lady Berry, and half-advancing into the room. “ But do not laugh at me till you are dressed, and then we can both laugh together ; but Alice and her mother must tutor you as they have been tutoring me ; for they say that we do not speak properly for our dress, and that the astrologer will discover that we are deceiving him, and will not tell us a single word of truth.”

“ Oh, but as I do not want him to tell *me any thing*,” said Rebecca, smiling, “ why need I dress up at all ?”

“ Yes, yes, but you must,” replied Lady Cordelia, taking her hand, and drawing her into her dressing-room, “ for it will never do for me to go alone this figure ; and *you* are to be my mother.

Look, what a fine old lumbering dress Alice has got for *you*."

"Very fine, indeed," said Lady Berry, laughing, as she took a survey of the ponderous chintz petticoats, and brown velvet hood, in which she was to figure. "But still, if we *should* meet any one we know, our dress cannot alter our faces, and how very foolish we should look."

"As for that," rejoined Lady Cordelia, laughing, as she reached a huge pair of double green spectacles from the toilet, "you, *my good woman*, are to wear these suitable appendages to your years; and I, of course, as befits a modest young damsel, shall keep my wimple close round my face; so that I do not think there is much chance even of Signor Manfredati's detecting us with all his infallibility, do you, Alice?"

"Ah, my Lady," said Alice solemnly, with a shake of her pretty head, to which Lord Burleigh's was nothing, "I would not be too sure of *that*; for they

do say that the Queen herself went, and Miss Jennings, and Miss Price, and two or three more ladies, dressed up as orange-girls ; and he found 'em *all* out, my Lady, and even told her Majesty as much as that the King did not care for her ; and showed her (in that way he has of showing people,) Miss Stewart as plain as I see you now, my Lady, and Nell Gwynn, and that brat of her's that they call Duke of St. Alban's, and said they were the cause of it ; and Lady Castlema—"

"Hush, hush, Alice, how can you believe such silly tales?" said Lady Cordelia.

"*Well*, my Lady," said Alice, with an air of confident resignation, "you'll *see* whether it is true or not."

"Do you know Lady Castlemaine?" asked Rebecca.

"I did know her," replied Lady Cordelia, "but, like many others, she has behaved very ungratefully to me ; but,

for that matter, there is nothing but ingratitude in the world, and I am sick of being kind to any one."

The fact was, that Lady Cordelia had, like many others, set out in life with feelings of what she thought excessive philanthropy and benevolence towards her fellow-creatures ; that is, with falsely giving human nature credit for a great deal more good than it possesses. With all who do this, misanthropy and disgust must naturally succeed to the more amiable and humane impulses, as disappointment destroys the chimera that visionary benevolence had conjured up ; but genuine philanthropy is a species of moral asbestos, which passes, unscathed, through the fiery ordeals of treachery and ingratitude, nor varies with the vices of others. If we never did right but for the sake of *right* itself, we could never be disappointed in the result ; if we never performed a kind and benevolent action, but from a sense of what is due to God

and ourselves (the *only* motive that *ought* to actuate us,) we could never be galled by ingratitude, or stung by injustice. And, above all, if we would only look at the faults, follies, and vices of others, as beacons to shun them in ourselves, we should be more apt to view them with a compassionate sort of obligation, than with severity and censure; but whilst we continue to do good on the principle of obtaining the gratitude and affection of our fellow-creatures, we only place out our virtues at an usurious interest, and deserve to fail in our speculations; for in expecting *too much* from *others*, we require *too little* from ourselves.

But to return to the two metamorphosed beauties, whose toilets were nearly completed.

“Dear me, my Lady,” said Alice, walking round Rebecca, “you look much too young, and seventy times too handsome for an old woman; and, as to *your ancles*, my Lady, (turning to her

her mistress) why, spite of the blue stockings, such a pair never belonged to a country-girl."

"Oh! these horrid shoes," said Lady Cordelia, laughing as she stumped about in them, "I think it would be a good way to boil the nails, as the pilgrim did the peas; for they hurt so, that I am sure I shall never be able to perform a pilgrimage either to our Lady of Loretto, or our gentleman of Tower-street."

"And pray what may that enormous chain and scissors be for?" enquired Lady Berry, as Alice reached one from the table.

"Oh that, my Lady, with this pin-cushion, and these knitting needles, and worsted stockings are to hang by your side; and this basket of peaches and flowers, Lady Cordelia is to take on her arm."

"Well, but now that we *are* dressed," said Lady Cordelia, "we ought to lose no time in setting out, so do Alice send

for a hackney coach, for I am sure we are such strange figures, that we should have a crowd after us, if we walked any part of the way."

When the coach arrived, the two ladies, accompanied by Alice, got into it, and after the man had been duly directed where to drive to, and assured them, with a knowing wink, that he knew very well where the place was, they found themselves rumbling along, actually on their way to the far-famed Signor Manfredati's, and so laughable was their appearance, as they looked at one another, and so flagrant seemed the absurdity of their expedition, that they felt greatly inclined to turn back, and most probably would, but for the wonders the loquacious damsel Alice kept relating of the astrologer, — wonders which she had not half finished recounting, when they found themselves in Tower-street ; a prior phalanx of hackney coaches prevented theirs from immediately drawing up to the door

of a very shabby, dirty looking house, several stories high ; and when they succeeded in doing so, the door was opened by an old woman, whose personal attractions were of the Hecate style. She told them in a sharp querulous tone, that the Signor was busy, and could not see them for an hour or two, but bade them follow her, which they did, up several flights of dirty narrow creaking stairs ; at length they arrived at a landing-place, which it appeared was to be their journey's end, for the old woman flung open a door, which was half off its hinges, and led the way into a low, dark room, with a sanded floor, two high backed chairs, with torn black leather seats, from which a large quantity of horse hair appeared for a long time to have been struggling for emancipation ; the light of day was only partially admitted through a narrow lattice window, between whose leaden squares were pieces of transparent horn, instead of glass.

and the drapery that hung from it, was of tattered red and white check ; on the hearth, before the expiring embers of a smoky green-wood fire sat, with elevated backs, and curled tails, two gigantic black cats, looking like “ kings of dark images ;” over the high and thickly scratched chimney-piece were two broken jugs filled with clay, from which towered the manes of a geranium and myrtle shrub ; from one side of the wall hung a torn and deeply smoked map of the county of Middlesex ; on the other, a helmet, cuirasse, and arquebuss, with its scriptural motto of “ O Lord, open thou our lips, and our mouths shall shew forth thy praise,” which had so recently constituted the armour of the round-head soldiery. As the two ladies and Alice were about to enter into this very uninviting apartment, the old woman, pointing to a well muddied sheep-skin mat, that lay at the threshold, rudely pushed Lady Cordelia aside, with a

“How now, wench, you need not carry the dirt of every street in London into my rooms; plague enough have I to keep them as they are, with all the silly jades like you that come here lover-hunting; but light pockets and heavy hearts is all that comes of such pranks.”

“You old sorceress, do you know?” began the indignant Alice, but just then recollecting that she did not want her to *know* whom she was speaking to, she, for the first time in her life, held her tongue when she wished to speak; and, following her lady’s example, made the ancient dame a low courtesy, and passed on into the room, where we shall for the present leave them, (Lady Cordelia and Rebecca in possession of the two high-backed chairs, and Alice, much to her discomfort, of the window seat, till the Signor Manfredati has vouchsafed to give them an audience) and follow Sir Ambrose in his morning’s walk.

CHAP. XVIII.

SIR Ambrose had of late, according to *his* version of the stars, read in his own especial share of them much of dark import, which left him ill at rest, as to his claims on futurity ; but being anxious to obtain a more favourable translation of their obscure meanings, than his own knowledge had enabled him to acquire, and having written to that arch knave, Lord Rochester, (or as we must now call him Pietro di Manfredati,) and received the answer (which he had written to him from the Duke of Buckingham's) appointing this day for a meeting, he left home at an early hour, filled with impatience as to the interview, and anxiety as to the result.

After a due perambulation of divers dirty lanes and crowded streets, the ba-

ronet arrived in Tower-street, not indeed at the same door to which his wife and Lady Cordelia came a few hours afterwards; for the wily Earl having foreseen that these sort of matrimonial rencontres would not (for obvious reasons,) be the most agreeable to the parties themselves, or the most advantageous to him, had, by separate entrances, guarded against all such contingencies.

As this meeting was preconcerted, Sir Ambrose had not to wait long before he was ushered into the presence of the formidable predictor of future events. After traversing several long narrow passages, and two or three rooms, much in the same style as that into which the old woman had conducted Lady Berry and Lady Cordelia, he reached one less shabby than the rest, where the forbidding old man, who had acted as groom of the chambers to him, and who looked as if he had been the better or worse half of the old woman, (if the positive fact of

best or worst could have been ascertained on a division by the lady in question,) resigned him to the care of Eden Green, who played lord in waiting, in his most perfectionized state of deformity; and on the entrance of the knight rose *ex officio*; and after ringing a bell, that sounded to the ears of Sir Ambrose like the “knell that was to summon him to heaven or to hell,” he threw open a door, and with a long black rod that he held in his hand, pushed the baronet into a long narrow passage, and shut the door on him. In this place shone just light enough to make “darkness visible;” and from the pillars on each side of him, round which were coiled twisted snakes, there issued a low hissing noise, like that of serpents; and ever and anon, a bat flitted across his path, flapping its ill-omened wizard wing against his cheek.

Used as he was to crucibles, alembics, and all the dark furniture of the forges, with the self-created horrors of his la-

boratory, he felt his blood curdle amid the death-like life of this place and its charnel atmosphere. Above him sparkled the mimic lustre of a thousand planets; and though he knew their light to be but artificial, yet to his distempered and anxious imagination, every star shone like a mirror, in which was typed futurity.

At length he reached the end of this long portentous passage, and found himself, without being intercepted by any further barrier, in a spacious apartment, the very air of which was the breath of luxury; how different from that he had been in a moment before! At the upper end of the room sat Lord Rochester on the throne, and in the dress he had described to the Duke of Bucks; one owl was perched familiarly on his shoulder, and the fates rolled their eyes darkly above him. At intervals, the solemn peal of an organ stole on the ear, with a

muffled sound, that gave the notes an almost supernatural tone.

Before the astrologer burnt, in a large silver censer, a quantity of incense, that sent up volumes of blue and highly perfumed smoke, which nearly obscured every object within its reach. A large volume of thickly interlineated hieroglyphics appeared completely to engross the attention of the seer. Around him were scattered sybiline leaves, on which figured the horoscopes of many. Celestial globes, compasses, and telescopes completed the rest of his apparatus. Nor did he raise his learned eyes till the knight stood full before him, and he then fixed them on him, without his features undergoing the slightest variation of expression. After having perused his countenance for a few minutes, he motioned to him to be seated; and then in a hollow sepulchral tone, demanded of him in Latin the day and hour of his nativity? Sir Ambrose replying in

the same language, informed him, that he had taken his stand in creation on the 6th of December, in the year 1600, between the hours of twelve at night and one in the morning.

The astrologer turned over the leaves of the book before him, and having muttered several times that six was a number to which the fates had never shown any favour, took his compasses, and after making innumerable calculations, with a pen cut out of an eagle's quill, closed the book, and knitting his dark brows, said, or rather shouted, with the yell of a fiend —

*“Sextus Tarquinius, Sextus Nero, Sextus et ipse,
Semper sub Sexto perdita Roma fuit.”*

And *your sextus* bodes you no better ! The yell was repeated by a triple reverberation, that lost none of its horrors as it died away in the distance ; and the prediction found a deep echo in the superstitious soul of Sir Ambrose.

“ Enough,” said he, with a groan ;
“ but there is another whose fate is
linked in mine ;” and as he spoke a
ghastly smile overspread his pale dis-
torted features.

The astrologer put his hand into a
golden urn, and took from it a dried
lotus leaf, on which were engraven in
black crooked characters, the following
lines, which were not much calculated
to remove the disagreeable impression
his former forebodings had left : —

*“ You would speak, you would speak of your fair
young bride,
But her place shall be soon by another’s side ;
And roses shall bloom amid the snow,
Ere grief for you that bride can know.*

*“ You would ask, you would ask more than know-
ledge may tell,
Yet full soon shall you learn that secret too well.
Then seek no more, nor tarry hither,
The flowers you’ve cull’d e’en now must wither.”*

Sir Ambrose ground his teeth, and
crumbling the ill-omened leaf in his

clenched hand, the fragments of it fell to the ground, on which he stamped furiously, and then turning to the astrologer said, in a slow measured ironical tone, as he folded his arms, and fixed his keen saturnine eyes upon him,

“And has fate *no* other *blessings* in store for me? though I must own she has been so *very* lavish, that I scarcely dare hope for more.”

“If thou art not yet satisfied,” replied the astrologer, “and must need have the seal of certainty set on all that I have told thee, even ask of a power beyond mine; and thy curiosity shall be gratified at all hazards;” so saying, he pointed to an aperture in the wall, resembling the mouth of a cave, and told the knight “he might consult the oracle.” Sir Ambrose paused for a moment, as if to ascertain the extent of the astrologer’s veracity, or his own superstition and credulity, and then, with the sudden movement of one who had no-

thing more to lose, rushed, rather than walked, into the cave, where all was total darkness; a few faint exquisite notes met his ear, like that of fairy music; the air was an Italian one of great popularity at that time, and one which Rebecca had often sung to him; it needed not this remembrance to overpower him; the place, the air, the more than mortal strain in which it was played were sufficient; and it had ceased for some minutes before Sir Ambrose had recovered himself sufficiently to recollect for what purpose he was there; and he then exclaimed, with a voice of thunder, as if he thought to bully the fates into dealing more mercifully with him than they had hitherto done,

“Oracle, if thou art an oracle, tell me what more I may expect; tell me *all*.”

A sweet soft voice arose like that of a woman's at a distance; and he heard (pronounced in accents so faint, that

they appeared more like the echo of music than music itself) the following words :

“ Once — twice — thrice — I warn’d thee of the
snare ;

Once — twice — thrice — I call’d aloud — ‘ Be-
ware !’

But thou tried the stream with boat and oar,
And darted briefly from the shore.

I call’d again — the last time — thou ferried
gaily on ;

Once more thy bark I hail’d, but thou, alas !
wert gone.”*

“ A very oracle truly,” said the knight, with a bitter laugh, when the voice ceased, “ for so obscure are thy words that I cannot see their import.”

A sound arose within the cave like the dash of waters, accompanied by a faint and distant scream, like that of nature’s last effort.

“ Ha ! what accursed necromancy is this ?” exclaimed Sir Ambrose, as he pressed his hands to his forehead, on

* Ancient poetry.

which hung the deadly dews of guilt and remorse. As conscience led him back to that fitful night when the tempest howled, and nature warred against herself, when, reckless alike of the present and the future, and dead to every feeling of humanity, he had plunged the infant Rebecca into the deep bed of the river, and left her to struggle with its world of waters. The scream, the dashing of the water, seemed to him but the re-acting of that night's tragedy, which he had tried long, but tried in vain, to forget; for even when he *looked* on Rebecca as his blooming bride, he too often could only *think* of her as the little victim his barbarity had destined to be the bride of death! He waited for no more, but rushed frantically from the cave, his eyes glaring wildly; his hands clenched, and his heart torn with a thousand contending passions, beating as though it would have burst its confines. On regaining the astrologer's presence, he paused for a few moments, and looked

enquiringly around him, like one awakening from a frightful dream — his features had assumed the pale green cast of death ; his livid blue lips quivered, but uttered no sound, as if the words they would have spoken had withered in the sirocco of his fevered and heavy breath ; his very cloak hung listlessly, as though it had lost all the energies that silk and velvet can possess, namely, their courtly gloss and modest hues. At length, with returning recollection, he seemed to madden into life ; and, forgetting all his former veneration, both for astrology and the astrologer, he advanced furiously towards the Earl, and grasping his shoulder with one hand, whilst he kept the other clenched on his own bosom —

“ Tell me,” said he, “ thou fiend, thou demon, thou prince of darkness, aught that thou knowest, and *all* that thou knowest of me and the past ? But what canst thou know ? What can any one know ? I did not murder her, (he continued, lowering his voice, and

looking fearfully around;) there is no blood upon these hands; and if these things be wet, (passing his hands over his sleeves) it is rai—rain, and rain comes from Heaven, knowest thou *that*? But no, no, no, *thou* canst know nothing of it; no, nothing! nothing!” and he burst into a hollow, hysterical laugh, and sank into the chair he had occupied on his arrival. The astrologer poured a few drops from a small crystal phial into a cup of cold water, and having got the unhappy knight to swallow it, began chafing his temples. When he came to himself he was calm and composed, and only appeared to retain a vague recollection of the past, the paramount idea of which was his having been guilty of some disrespectful word or deed towards the astrologer, for which he now appeared anxious to atone by every species of respect within his power.

“Father,” he began, “if I have in aught had the ill fortune to offend you —”

“Peace, peace, my son,” interrupted the astrologer in a most benign and protecting voice, “the soul is not responsible for the weakness of our mortal nature; that is, for the infirmities of the body, and thine is ill at ease, so that thine own home would best suit thee at this present.”

Saying which, (and thinking that this scene had lasted quite long enough, an opinion in which the reader will, no doubt, coincide,) he opened a door that led to a landing place different from that by which Sir Ambrose had first entered, and consigning him to the care of the old man who stood there in waiting, returned and closed the door of the room, which the knight began to wish he had never entered. He was in no state to walk home, but having induced his conductor to dispatch a messenger for a hackney coach, he threw himself into it, so oppressed with thought as scarcely to think at all. His first question, on arriving at Whitehall, was —

“ Is Lady Berry at home ? ”

“ No, Sir ; she has been out all the morning,” was the reply.

“ ’Tis well,” said he, and instantly repaired to his laboratory, there to commune with his own heart as he best thought fit ; — one resolution he was not long in coming to, that of allowing nothing to transpire relative to his morning’s adventure ; he also recollected that the next night was that of the masquerade, and he determined to appear there with his beautiful wife. “ No,” said he, as he walked at a hurried pace to and fro — “ the world shall never know my folly or my madness ; if I have knowledge that they may not reach, I have bought it dearly ; yet, what is knowledge ? we may but know too much to be happy, and too little to be wise. After all, ignorance is the mist that hallows all things ; for it is with knowledge as with every thing else, to *know* is to despise the vanity of the idol we ourselves have worshipped ; but what have I now to do

with knowledge? but yes, I have its acme yet to learn; the knowledge how to *die*! Well, I will not now turn dunce; all nature has her tempests; what if those of the human heart be the most difficult to quell? the calms which succeed are more deadly and lasting; then shall not *this* prepare me for death's still greater calm? aye, that calm, and the grave's gloom, is Lethe's gloom; but has it Lethe's quiet? My poor Rebecca, and wilt thou—but pshaw! what boots all this? I must be as I have been; and something more. Rebecca, I will meet thee with smiles, doubt them not for being the first, since they will also be the last.”

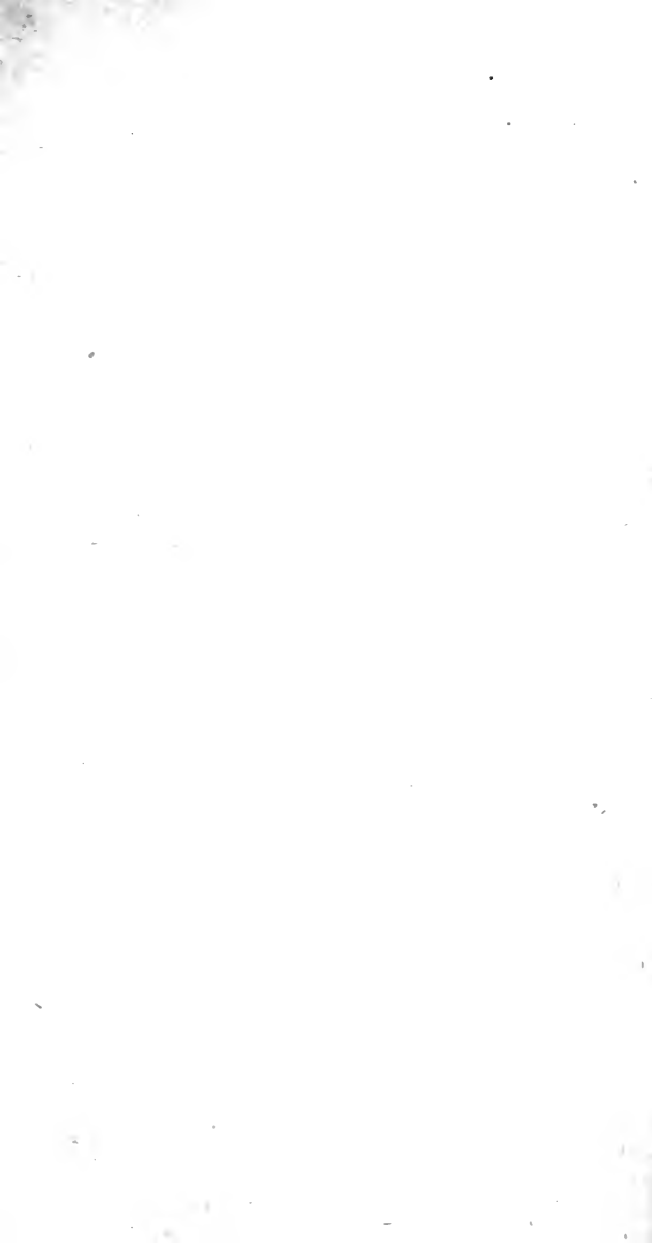
Sir Ambrose kept his word, and on her return greeted his wife with a greater show of happiness than he had ever evinced before.

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